Title:

The Professional Preparation, Knowledge and Beliefs of Kindergarten Teachers in Saudi Arabia

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By

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Abstract

The study used Social Cultural Theory as an analytical framework to understand the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). A multi-method approach to data collection was adopted, involving a questionnaire, interviews and documentary analysis of both the pre-school curriculum in KSA and the programme content. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were therefore employed to achieve the research objectives. The research methodology was based on the interpretive approach and included a case study. The participants were student-teachers studying on the four-year teacher training programme at one of the universities in KSA. Responses to four hundred and nineteen questionnaires completed by student-teachers across the four years of the programme were analysed, and a detailed case study involving 32 student-teachers was carried out. These student-teachers were interviewed three times each over three terms, with a focus on the nature of their knowledge and beliefs.

The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed using SPSS to summarise the results of the closed questions in the questionnaire and to compare the differences between the student-teachers' perspectives in each study year. All interviews were taped and transcribed. The data were coded and recoded several times using the continuous comparative process. When broad categories/themes emerged, these created sub-categories. Similarly, the data gained from the questionnaire's open-ended questions were also analysed qualitatively.

The findings focus on the results from the questionnaire for each study year, followed by a direct comparison of student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs across the four years. The findings from the interviews with student-teachers are presented separately for each study year in order that the development of their knowledge and beliefs over the four-year programme can be seen. The findings revealed that student-teachers' beliefs and their knowledge were closely linked. Although student-teachers' knowledge developed as a result of their learning, some of their beliefs about Early Childhood Education (ECE) in general seemed to remain stable over the period of their university course. Many factors influenced the training of the student-teacher within Saudi culture and practices, such as the cultural context, the society, national

policy, religion, module content, styles of teaching, visits to kindergarten, self-learning, and others' knowledge/experience and support. These others included friends, other student-teachers, and relatives who were studying on the kindergarten programme or worked in the field of ECE. The findings showed that student-teachers built their teaching identities on the wider social-cultural purposes of education in Saudi society, which were consistent with expectations of their roles in society. However, various constraints related to the university context, to the kindergarten context and to the social-cultural context influenced their preparation as teachers.

The study indicated many limitations to the current apprenticeship approach, due to the predominantly transmissive style of education at university. Student-teachers were not progressively immersed in a more fully developed apprenticeship model in which teachers learnt about the cultures and practices of ECE within the contexts of practice. This study strongly challenges a system where student-teachers only have one term of teaching practice. It is argued that teaching practice should start much earlier in the programme and be extended. A model for developing professional preparation programmes of Initial Teachers (IT) in the field of ECE is presented. Implications arising from this study and recommendations which could improve Teacher Education (TE) in KSA are outlined. Finally, suggestions for further research are presented.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late Dad and to my Mum,
who believed in me when I did not believe in myself.

My deep gratitude goes to my sisters and brothers (Faizah, Nawal, Sarah, Turki, Mansoor, Ibraheem, Salah, Saad and Khalid). Without their support, encouragement and prayers, this work would not have been achieved.

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I would like to thank the staff of the kindergarten programme, especially the coordinator Dr. Asma Ali for her continuous co-operation during the data collection stage for this study. I am also grateful to all of the study participants for their time and willingness to share their knowledge and beliefs. Special thanks are due to Dr. Aisha Hassan, who was a great model in my study and work life.

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List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

Abbreviations/ Acronyms	What does it stand for?
[AGPUND]	Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organisation
[BERA]	British Educational Research Association
[COE]	College of Education
[DKC]	Developed Kindergarten Curriculum
[EC]	Early Childhood
[ECE]	Early Childhood Education
[FCDM]	Family and Child Development Major
[GPGE]	General Presidency of Girls Education
[GPA]	Grade Point Average
[GSEC]	General Secondary Education Certificate
[HED]	Home Economics Department
[ICT]	Information and Communication Technology
[IT]	Initial Teacher
[ITE]	Initial Teacher Education
[KC]	Kindergarten Curriculum
[KFU]	King Faisal University
[Kg]	Kindergarten
[KSA]	The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
[MOE]	Ministry of Education
[MOEP]	Ministry of Economy and Planning
[MOHE]	Ministry of Higher Education
[MOK]	Ministry of Knowledge
[MPCK]	Mathematics Pedagogical Content Knowledge
[NCE-DL]	National Centre for E-learning and Distance Learning
[NPIT]	National Plan for Information Technology
[PCK]	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
[SEN]	Special Education Needs
[SN]	Special Needs
[TE]	Teacher Education
[UNESCO]	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Early Childhood (EC) is considered an important phase of human development. It is a phase of flexibility and readiness to learn, and to acquire and develop skills, knowledge and understanding. The fundamental bases of character and personality are established during these years. It is no surprise therefore, that the KSA is interested in improving the professionalism of its kindergarten teachers by updating its pre-service teacher education programmes. In 2004, a University in KSA opened a Kindergarten Major with a new four-year programme for the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers. This is considered as an ambitious step which acknowledges the need for highly qualified kindergarten teachers. It has been completed alongside the establishment of more kindergartens for children. In 2004/2005 the number of pre-school centres established in KSA and administrated by the Ministry of Education (MOE) was 1320, then in 2010/2011 it was 1667 (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2012a). Therefore, this study will explore Saudi student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs during their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers in KSA context. In the following sections, the research aim, objectives and questions will be presented. The statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and the researcher's professional concern will be explained, and then an overview of structure of the thesis will be provided.

1.1 Research Aim, Objectives, and Questions

The aim of the study is to explore the knowledge and beliefs of student-teachers during their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers at the College of Education (COE) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Research Objectives

The study will attempt to achieve the following objectives:

1- To understand a teacher-training programme for kindergarten teachers from the point of view of the student-teachers.

2- To investigate programme content, and how this programme is concordant with the pre-school curriculum in KSA.

3- To understand the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers.

4- To understand the extent to which the kindergarten teacher-training programme develops student-teachers' knowledge bases for teaching and learning.

Research Questions

1- What are the perspectives of student-teachers regarding the training of kindergarten teachers in the COE at a University?

2- How does the programme content prepare student-teachers to become kindergarten teachers according to the perspective of the student-teachers?

3- What are the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers? And how do their knowledge and beliefs develop over a four-year programme?

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In 1986 the College of Agricultural Sciences and Food at King Faisal University (KFU) in KSA opened a Family and Child Development Major (FCDM) with a 4-year programme for graduate kindergarten teachers. This was one of the specializations of the Home Economics Department (HED) in this college. The major closed in 1992 because the General Presidency of Girls Education (GPGE) now the MOE, which was established in 1952, did not employ any graduates as kindergarten teachers from this programme. This was because the policy makers' point of view of the GPGE was that FCDM graduates had not taken sufficient courses in pre-school education and pedagogical strategies. As a result, there was a long controversy between the GPGE and the KFU about the fate of these graduates. Accordingly, the COE organized an educational training programme for the graduates for a year until they could commence their duties. This information is based on my knowledge and experience during my work as a graduate from this major, then as teacher trainer and director of HED for 9 years. It is also developed from informal conversations held with colleagues in KFU and those responsible for employment.

Nowadays, there is great awareness of the importance of pre-school education. Research evidence indicates that positive and high quality educational experiences have immediate benefits, and enable children to develop into capable and dependable citizens (Gahwaji, 2006). In 2004, the COE opened a Kindergarten Major with a new four-year programme for the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers. This study will focus on the first, second, third and fourth years in which student-teachers

are prepared for becoming kindergarten teachers. Little is known about the nature of student-teachers' knowledge in KSA, and about the effects of this knowledge on their experience and beliefs during their professional preparation to become kindergarten teachers. The decision to focus this study on the preparation period at one College of Education is taken for a number of reasons. The most important is the lack of specialised teachers in the field of pre-school education in the majority of kindergartens in KSA (Samadi and Marwa, 2006), and there is no national data available which documents the teachers in this field by qualifications and experiences (Gahwaji, 2006). Also, the University and its graduates from this new major do not face any problems with the MOE regarding their employment as kindergarten teachers, as happened previously with graduates from FCDM. This study is a challenge, since the programme has not previously been studied or evaluated. Therefore, it is important to understand the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers, to investigate programme content and to examine how this programme is consistent with the pre-school curriculum in KSA.

1.3 Significance of the Study

In KSA there is no evidence of empirical research in the field of pre-school education programmes, specifically in understanding kindergarten teacher preparation programmes. In addition, no studies have been located in KSA about the knowledge and beliefs of students who will become kindergarten teachers. The current study will be applied to student-teachers who are studying on a Kindergarten Major with a four-year programme for the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers. This study will be the first in KSA and may indicate further areas of research that could be conducted in this field. In addition, the findings of this study will contribute significantly towards decision-making in KSA, not only through universities and colleges adopting, improving or developing kindergarten teacher education programmes, but also through attracting the attention of policy makers at the MOE. As a result, it may open a window to formal discussion between policy and decision makers, because it will present empirical evidence. In addition, the investigation will add to the wider international research base on teachers' knowledge and beliefs, by providing a culturally situated dimension to the understanding of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). Because most of the research on beliefs in general has been

conducted in western cultures, not in an Arab-Islamic culture (Mansour, 2008c), this study will be a significant contribution to this area of knowledge.

1.4 Professional Concern

In order to refer to my professional concern, I reflect in this section on my previous personal experiences as a school student, a student-teacher on a four-year programme for ITE, and a teaching assistant and lecturer in KFU. In KFU, I taught practical modules in ITE programme which were related to child's learning and development, such as 'Principles of Child Guidance and Counselling' module. This module was taught for student-teachers in the second term of the third study year, in which student-teachers were going to kindergarten every other week for one term (approximately 7 visits to kindergarten for 2-3 hours for each visit) to inspect children's behaviours/problems and class teachers' interaction with them. Then they write a critical report for each visit as an analysis of this interaction. As part of my role as teacher-educator for this module, I gave each student-teacher a feedback on each report/visit. Then there was a dialogue and discussion with the whole class regarding that, and many examples were given to support their understanding of how they can interact and deal as teachers with these behaviours/problems in the kindergarten context. At that time, I felt that student-teachers' knowledge was improving, and they were able to reflect this improvement in their next visit to kindergarten. However, although student-teachers were receiving a lot of theoretical information as a formal education at university (cumulative knowledge), I became aware that the familiarity with children seems to be an essential factor in successful educational process. This is because I believe that development and quality student-teachers' knowledge and experiences are correlated with the number of their visits and their interacting with children, in which their confidence in the classroom increases. In this sense, they make use of this knowledge in the real context in order to develop their understanding of effective pedagogical approaches for teaching young children.

In 2004, a College of Education in my region in KSA opened a Kindergarten Major with a new four-year programme for the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers. My interest as teacher-educator motivated me to look at the structure of this programme and the content of the module. I became particularly interested in

knowing what student teachers believe the year they start their actual interaction with children in the kindergarten should be. Also, based on the reflection on my own learning experience, I noted that it may be late to start the teaching practice with young children only in the last term of the final year of the programme. That, in my view, does not provide sufficient time to give them effective practical experiences.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of twelve chapters with the following structure:

Chapter One, concentrates on the aim of the study, the research objectives and questions, statement of the problem, and the significance of the study. In addition, some information for the professional concern of the researcher as teacher-educator in the context of ITE in the KSA was given in this chapter.

Chapter Two presents a background of the KSA context including: overview of geography, population, the Saudi religious and cultural context. Also, this chapter presents the structure of the education system in KSA under the following strands: the general education system and higher education level; the role of women and girls' education; and pre-school education in KSA.

Chapter Three presents a review of the literature on the following concepts: some information about the kindergarten stage in terms of its definition; kindergarten teacher qualification; the aims of the early learning curricula; and the importance of kindergarten programmes. Also, a review of teacher education programmes in terms of their structure; knowledge bases for teaching; beliefs of student-teachers about teaching and learning and the relationship between beliefs and knowledge are outlined. Then, the image of teacher and models/paradigms for ITE are presented. The review of research studies in KSA is addressed, and then the discussion focuses on social-cultural theory, which underpins the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Four describes the research design and methodology. The theoretical and philosophical assumptions of the study are presented in terms of ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. This is followed by a discussion of the sampling and data collection methods, the ethical considerations of the data

collection, pilot study, and the data analysis procedure. Finally, research challenges and issues are discussed.

Chapter Five presents analysis of the findings from the questionnaire for the study. It consists of five sections: findings related to the analysis of student-teacher questionnaire in the (1) first year; (2) second year; (3) third year and (4) fourth year. Finally, summary of the findings from the questionnaire across the four years of the programme are discussed.

Chapter Six to Ten, present the findings of the analysis and interpretations of the data from semi-structured interviews with 32 student-teachers who were studying in the four-year programme. These interviews were based on the student-teachers' experiences in their first, second, third and fourth study years, as well as their teaching practice.

In Chapter Eleven, the main quantitative and qualitative findings of the study in relation to KSA context and existing literature are discussed through the use of social cultural theory as an analytical framework. Five themes are discussed: (1) knowledge and beliefs; (2) models of initial teacher education; (3) communities of practice; (4) teacher identity and (5) constraints affecting student-teachers' learning and teaching.

In Chapter Twelve, the implications and recommendations, based on the findings of the study, are presented for policy and decision makers, pre-service teacher-educators, personal tutors and librarians at university, classroom teachers and senior management team at kindergarten and student-teachers in KSA. Also, considerations for professional development, as well as for practitioners and researchers in the field of ITE programmes, are discussed. A model is proposed, which illustrates how the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers is formed. It states the important ideas for teaching and learning in ECE, and then suggestions for further research are made.

Chapter Two: Saudi Arabia, Culture and Education

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a cultural overview of the KSA, in order to provide a contextual framework for the study. This chapter covers three parts: the first part presents overview of geography and the total population in KSA. The second part includes the Saudi religious and cultural context, demonstrating how religion shapes the Saudi culture and gives it uniqueness. Specifically, the influence of Islamic beliefs and practices on the foundations of educational goals and policies in KSA is highlighted. Since the participants in this study are Muslim Saudi women, cultural overview of the role of women in Islamic society in general and in KSA society in particular is presented. This will help the reader to understand the context in which the participants live. The last part deals with education system in KSA in general and pre-school education in particular. The chapter gives insights into the design, the practical and theoretical framework, and the content of Kindergarten Curriculum (KC) in Saudi Arabia. This is as a documentary analysis which will help us to understand how this programme of ITE in the field of ECE is in agreement with the KC in Saudi Arabia.

2.1 Background Information

The Overview of Geography

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is in the south-west corner of Asia, in which it is the crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa. It is extended over 2,150,000 square kilometres, and it covers approximately 80 % of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by: the Red Sea on the West; Yemen and Oman on the South; the Arabian Gulf/ Persian Gulf and the United Arab Emirates and Qatar on the East; and Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait on the North, as shown in Figure 2.1. (Ministry of Economy and Planning (MOEP), 2012). More than 50 % of the total area of KSA is desert. Saudi Arabia is divided into five regions, and the climate differs from region to region. They are: the Northern Region; the Southern Region; the Eastern Region; the Western Region and the Central Region. In the Western Region, the mountains are very rich in minerals with large deposits of limestone, gypsum and sand. The Eastern Region has the richest reservoirs of oil in the world (Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), 2010a).

Figure 2.1 Map of Saudi Arabia

*** Source: Magellan Geographix, 1997**

The map above shows many of Saudi Arabia's important cities. Saudi Arabia is guardian of Islam's two holiest cities which are located in the Western Region. They are Makkah AL-Mukaramah and Madinah AL-Munawara. Makkah is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the central point of Hajj, the Islamic pilgrimage in which almost two to three million Muslims from all parts of the world participate every year. Madinah is the city where Prophet Muhammad emigrated and lived (MOEP, 2012).

Population

The total Saudi population as of September 2004 increased to 22.7 million, and 16.5 million of them are Saudi citizens. Compared with 16.9 million in 1992, of which 12.3 million were Saudi citizens, and 7 million in 1974 census, of which 6.2 million were Saudi citizens, the numbers have increased considerably. According to 2004 census, almost half the Saudi citizens population (49.23%) are under the age of 15, while 47.50% of them are between the age 15-64 (MOEP, 2009). In this sense, increasing birth-rate imposes an increasing need for quality pre-school teachers.

At the end of April 2010, the KSA's population was 27.136.977, of which 18.707.576 were Saudi citizens. Of the Saudi citizens' population, 9.527.173 (50.9%) is male and 9.180.403 (49.1%) female (MOEP, 2011).

2.2 The Saudi Religious and Cultural Context

There are many factors which shape the socio-political context of educational research. These include international, national, local, social and discursive contexts, and the researcher must be aware of them when carrying out her/his research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Professional preparation of teachers is a part of the context in which it is carried out. This is stated by Linde (2003, p. 110) that: "teacher education has to be analysed and understood in the context where it takes place". Since this study has been conducted in the KSA context, brief information is given focusing on key aspects of Saudi religious and cultural context.

As stated earlier, KSA is "the heart of the two Holy sites of Islam and the Saudi Government's policy is based upon Islamic law" (Habbash, 2011, p. 32). The main religion in KSA is Islam, which encourages knowledge and learning. All Saudi people are Muslims, and the Arabic language is the official language in KSA, "whereas English language is widely used in business" (Albahiri, 2010, p. 17). Since there is a homogeneity of Islamic culture between Saudi nationals in this country (Gahwaji, 2006), it is considered that within the Saudi cultural context Islam enriches and influences all areas of life for Saudi citizens. So, policies in KSA and educational goals are based on Islamic beliefs and practices. In the country there is a substantial emphasis on religion and Saudi culture, where the Islamic religion is the foundation of Saudi culture. Therefore, the objective of education in KSA is:

> *Understanding Islam correctly and completely, implanting and spreading the Islamic doctrine, providing students with Islamic values and instructions, acquiring knowledge along with different skills, developing constructive behavioural tendencies; society economically, socially, culturally, and qualifying members in order to become useful in the construction of their society* (Education policy article 28) (MOE, 1976).

It is clear from the above that the Islamic religion is a major factor in Saudi culture. However, the current policy of Saudi education aims to be more efficient in order to "meet the growing economic and social needs of the nation. … and shaping them into a workforce of international standards" (Habbash, 2011, p. 34). Habbash (2011)

argues against the misconceptions of the KSA as a mainly traditional society, particularly by mainstream Western observers, and he states:

> *Today's Saudi Arabia is a multifaceted combination of tradition and modernity. In a country where a restive government sought to speed up economic transformation and modernization, one does not need to live in Saudi Arabia to have a sense of the inextricable bond between the Saudi people, their culture and the Arabic language* (Habbash, 2011, p. 31).

Thus, the influence of culture should be taken into account when the researcher interprets student teachers' beliefs (Olson, 1988; Barnes, 1992; Hamilton and Richardson, 1995). This is because the "influence of personal religious beliefs on the development of the beliefs and practices of any teacher will be significant" (Mansour, 2008a, p.1607). However, given that there are also Western influences on education in KSA, this thesis will uncover how these different influences are aligned.

2.3 Education System in Saudi Arabia

In KSA, there are six stages of education: pre-school; primary/elementary; intermediate; secondary; undergraduate and the postgraduate stage. The general education system is free and is offered to all citizens, as well as providing books and health services for students. Moreover, a monthly stipend is paid by the Saudi government for students in higher education level (about £160 per month for all university students), and for students who study in Quran schools (primary, intermediate and secondary level) and vocational schools (secondary level).

The educational policy in KSA asserts that co-education is banned at all stages of education, with the exception of pre-school education (nurseries and kindergartens) (MOE, 1976). This means that the attendance in the latter centres is open for boys and girls, but all teachers and caregivers are women. Educational policy in Saudi Arabia, which prevents mixing in schools and universities that are under the supervision of the MOE and the MOHE, reflects an Islamic view, and aims to avoid many of the negatives that may arguably occur in co-education beyond the age of seven, according to the cultural beliefs and traditions of the country the Saudi education system is structured into three levels:

Pre-school Level: it is divided into two stages;

(a) Nursery schools: in which children are accepted from 1 to 3 years old. These schools consider "an extension of the home environment and therefore aim to take care of the child and provide opportunities for play" (Alzaydi, 2010, p. 18).

(b) Kindergarten schools: to serve young children aged from 3 to 6 years old, as shown in Table 2.1. According to children's age, they attend in three levels (Kg1, Kg2 and Kg3). Although attending pre-school in KSA is not compulsory, many people believe it is essential in their children's journey of life (MOHE, 2010b). Many Saudi families are aware that pre-school centres, at least for the last year of kindergarten (Kg3: age 5-6), prepare their children for primary school and to provide them with useful knowledge and skills (Khomais, 2007; Alzaydi, 2010). In this level, there are both private and governmental nurseries and kindergartens. In 2010/2011 there were 1,667 kindergartens in KSA that are under the supervision of the MOE, as shown in Table 2.2 (MOE, 2012a).

Primary, Intermediate and Secondary Level: this level is called the general education and it is compulsory. It is divided into three stages (primary, intermediate and secondary), as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 The general education in Saudi Arabia

Stages	Age Group	Education System
Kindergarten	3- 6	Not Prerequisite to next stage
Elementary	6- 12	Prerequisite to next stage
Intermediate	12- 15	Prerequisite to next stage
Secondary	15- 18	Prerequisite to next stage

***Al-Salloom, 1991, as cited in Madini, 2005**

After completion of primary and intermediate education, students normally go to secondary schools. These secondary schools are offering programmes in both the arts and sciences, or they are vocational schools (MOHE, 2010b; Habbash, 2011). Albahiri (2010) explains the structure of the academic year in general education system, and how students' progress is determined:

> *The academic year consists of two terms and is normally about 30 to 35 weeks long, with 15 to 18 weeks in each term. Students usually study for 25 to 36 hours each week. Each class lasts 45 minutes. Mid-term and final exams are used to evaluate students in intermediate and secondary schools, whereas a formative evaluation is the only approach used in elementary schools* (Albahiri, 2010, p. 19).

Students who complete successfully the third stage of secondary school, are awarded the General Secondary Education Certificate (GSEC), which enables them to register in higher education institutions (Habbash, 2011). According to 2010/2011 census, there were 32.986 schools in the KSA that are under the supervision of the MOE; 1667 of them are for pre-school level as it is shown in Table 2.2. This table also gives a summary of statistics on the general education in KSA by academic year 2010/2011 (MOE, 2012a).

Table 2.2 Summary of statistics on general education in KSA by academic year (2010/2011)

الإداريون المساعدون Administrative Staf		شاغلو الوظائف التعليمية Academic Staff		الطلاب Students		الفصول Class-rooms	المدارس Schools	الجنس Gender	المرحلة Stage
سعودي Saudi	جملة Total	سعودي Saudi	جملة Total	سعودي Saudi	Total جملة				
2,165	2,247	10,910	11,431	109,236	117,653	6,617	1,667	مشترك Boys & Girls	رياض أطفال Kindergarten
4,667	4,844	103,692	113,821	1,107,697	1,273,119	66,132	6,784	ذكور Male	ابتدائي Elementary
7,012	7,108	112,812	114,504	1,068,784	1,240,696	61,624	6,844	إناث Female	
11,679	11,952	216,504	228,325	2,176,481	2,513,815	127,756	13,628	جملة Total	
2,677	2,748	57,656	62,306	563,682	636,693	26,616	4,179	ذكور Male	متوسط Intermediate
3,565	3,597	59,714	60,174	489,664	561,721	22,599	3,820	إناث Female	
6,242	6,345	117,370	122,480	1,053,346	1,198,414	49,215	7,999	جملة Total	
1,750	1,892	41,729	49,654	565,970	625,365	22,597	2,533	ذكور Male	ثانوي Secondary
2,862	2,906	51,652	52,762	444,776	500,237	19,381	2,480	إناث Female	
4,612	4,798	93,381	102,416	1,010,746	1,125,602	41,978	5,013	جملة Total	
170	171	5,566	5,657	16,551	17,718	3,778	1,066	ذكور Male	تربية خاصة Special Ed.
157	163	2,107	2,202	8,742	9,420	1,453	528	إناث Female	
327	334	7,673	7,859	25,293	27,138	5,231	1,594	جملة Total	
0	0	0	0	9,435	12,638	1,261	729	ذكور Male	تعليم كبار Adult Ed.
50	50	10,195	10,197	59,536	70,159	6,806	2,356	إناث Female	
50	50	10,195	10,197	68,971	82,797	8,067	3,085	جملة Total	
9,264	9,655	208,643	231,438	2,263,335	2,565,533	120,384	15,291	ذكور Male	المجموع Total
15,811	16,071	247,390	251,270	2,180,738	2,499,886	118,480	17,695	إناث Female	
25,075	25,726	456,033	482,708	4,444,073	5,065,419	238,864	32,986	جملة Total	

***Ministry of Education in KSA, 2012**

Higher Education Level:

This level follows the secondary stage and students' age is of 18 or over. Although the higher education (governmental) is provided free for Saudi citizens, not all graduates of secondary schools are able to gain access to governmental universities. This is due to the increasing number of secondary school graduates, and the offered places at universities are insufficient to accept all these graduates. All university students are accepted "according to their grades in test prepared by the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education" (Alebaikan, 2010).

The MOHE, which was established in 1975, is the supervising organization on higher education institutions (universities and colleges). Higher education level offers

undergraduate programmes, which lead to degrees of Associate Diplomas and Bachelors. Postgraduate programmes, in turn, lead to degrees of Associate High Diplomas, Masters and Doctorate. English is "used as the medium of instruction in technological and science fields, while all other subjects are taught in Arabic" (Alebaikan, 2010, p. 19). Alzaydi (2010) mentions:

> *The duration of undergraduate study varies according to specialization. Some courses such as Education and Science last for 4 years, others such as Engineering and Pharmacy are for 5 years, and medicine last for 7 years* (Alzaydi, 2010, p. 19).

Since 2004, Saudi governmental universities have increased in number from 8 to 24 universities (MOHE, 2012). According to 2011/2012 census, there are 54 private and governmental universities and colleges in the KSA, where 24 universities are funded by the government, which accommodate 666,475 students according to 2010 census (Ibid, 2012), and 9 universities and 21 colleges are funded by private sectors. In addition, there are other higher education institutes, which are semi-autonomous institutes of the MOHE. For example, two universities, two colleges, and Jubail Technical Institute follow the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, and they are governed by the Board of Directors of the Royal Commission (Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu (RCJY), 2009). It is worth to provide a brief information about governmental and private higher education, as it is stated on website: (*http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/studyinside/Pages/default.aspx*)

Government Universities: the MOHE is responsible for supervising, planning and coordinating the Kingdom's requirements with regards to the higher education, with the aim of preparing a national cadre specializing in administrative and scientific fields, to improve the national development. As a result, higher education has developed substantially in most of the scientific fields. Currently, there are 24 high-capacity universities, spread in the various geographic regions of the Kingdom. All these universities are linked to the MOHE, but enjoy a high level of independence in both administrative and academic scopes. The Ministry also gives financial support to Saudi students who are studying abroad, distributed in different countries and scientific fields that are necessary to fulfil the country's requirements.

The Ministry, through supervision and coordination with the universities, gives special attention to scientific research, which is an important source for the scientific and civic development, and it is an important part of the functions and tasks of universities. The Ministry supports specialized research institutes and centres, and conducts scientific symposiums and conferences, which enables the academic staff of the universities to participate in specialized scientific activities, and learn about the latest developments in their fields (MOHE, 2012).

Private Higher Education: the Sixth Development Plan (1995-2000) included, among its objectives, the aim to expand the base of the higher education through the contribution of the private sector by establishing private colleges and universities. The Council of Ministers Decree No. 33, issued in 25-6-1997, stated the approval to enable the private sector to establish non-profit educational institutions on sound administrative, scientific, economic and financial principles, in order to participate in fulfilling the development requirements and to complement the role of the governmental universities (MOHE, 2010c). Encouraging incentives and support are provided to the private higher education sector from Saudi government. For example, it gives financial support to licensed private universities and colleges (Ibid, 2012).

The Saudi government places a high priority on the education sector, giving a considerable attention to higher education and research (Alebaikan, 2010). Al-Ankary (1998) stated that the budget of higher education increased from $15 million in 1965 to $ 1.6 billion in 1995. He explained this attention to the higher education, along with a very big budget, as follows:

> *The continuous support and interest in higher education are shown through the establishment of several university campuses complete with a high standard of educational facilities, infrastructure, laboratories, support complexes and vital services* (Al-Ankary, 1998, p. 4).

In 2010, more than a quarter ($ 36.7 billion) of the total Saudi Arabia's budget (more than $ 146 billion), is spent on education and training (Alebaikan, 2010). The National Plan for Information Technology (NPIT) was established by MOHE for the development of education sector in KSA. In 2006, the National Centre for E-learning and Distance Learning (NCE-DL) was established by the NPIT, to provide:

> *Technical support, tools, and the means necessary for the development of digital educational content in Higher Education throughout the country, ... the centre strives to provide rich multimedia resources to enable lecturers to integrate blended learning that fits their course and university needs* (Alebaikan, 2010, p. 10).

Regarding the ITE system, there are two systems:

The first: after obtaining a Bachelor degree in a field of specialization such as science and English, graduates join the COE and they study the educational preparation programme for one year.

The second: students study the educational preparation programme alongside with the academic preparation programme in their specialization, and the length of this system is four years (Alzaydi, 2010).

This study will be applied to the Saudi student-teachers (girls) who are studying a four-year programme for the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers (in a university funded by the government), in which student-teachers will hold a degree of Bachelors.

2.4 Role of Women and Girls' Education in Saudi Arabia

The status of women in Islamic society in general and in KSA society in particular has been a complex topic that could generate an issue of misunderstanding (Daghistani, 2007). Clearly, the Muslim and Western views about the role of women are culturally different. The stereotype of Muslim women being ignorant, having no rights or opportunities of education or work, is definitely based on incorrect assumptions (MOE, 2012b). From the beginning of Islam, the 'Holy Quran' gave women economic and social rights. For example, they have been legally allowed to inherit and bequeath property. In Islam, the woman can hold her wealth in her own name, with no commitment to contribute this wealth to her husband or her family. Therefore, this example is inconsistent with the view that Islam undervalues women (Ibid, 2012a).

It is agreed and expected, under Islam, that a woman gives a full commitment to a family and home-making. This role is considered as pre-eminent in society and women enjoy this special position. For that reason, in Islamic society, the steadiness

of family life and the safety of women are essential elements in this Islamic context. In this respect, however, it could be a mistake to assume that the role of women in KSA society, as Islamic society, is limited to a family home-making. The development of the KSA has brought with it increasing opportunities for women in both education and employment (Ibid, 2012a). Under King Fahd Al-Saud (1982-2005) and currently King Abdullah Al-Saud, there has been more encouragement for women to participate actively both in public and private life. In terms of employment, women now play an active role in teaching, medicine, social work, law, administrative positions, banks, accounting and IT, journalists, broadcasting, and private businesses, such as women's hairdressers, tailors, or in commerce (MOE, 2012b; Alebaikan, 2010).

Officially, girls' education in KSA began in 1960. It started with fifteen primary schools, which were opened "along with a single class in the Elementary Institute of Teacher Preparation" (Al-Rawaf, 1999, as cited in Gahwaji, 2006, p. 29). The number of female students then was 5,180; this number has increased rapidly. The number of female schools, at kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary level, has also increased to 17,695 schools in 2010/2011, with 118,480 classes and 251,270 teachers (MOE, 2012a). In addition, the number of female students at higher education level has increased rapidly from 172,532 female students in 1998 to 614,969 female students according to 2009/2010 census (MOHE, 2009; MOEP, 2011).

2.5 Pre-school Education in Saudi Arabia

The first private pre-school centre (Dar- AL-Hannan) was opened in 1965 in Jeddah city, and gradually there were thirteen pre-school centres in 1969. It is worth mentioning that until 1975 the private sector was responsible for the pre-school education in KSA (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1991). The first public pre-school centre was opened for children in KSA in 1975 by the Ministry of Knowledge (MOK), which was responsible for boys' education. At this time, the MOK was responsible for all the pre-school centres in KSA. In 1980, the GPGE, now the MOE, became officially responsible for all public and private centres, and opened the door for teachers to work in this area.

Although pre-school education in KSA is non-compulsory, year by year the numbers of pre-school centres, which were divided between the public (governmental) and the private sector, increased considerably. In 2000/2001 the number of pre-school centres established in KSA, and administrated by the MOE was 1074 (MOE, 2002). This number increased to 1320 pre-school centres in 2004/2005, of which 342 were public and 978 were private, with 5704 classes, which included 100,032 children, 9744 teachers and 1074 administrators (MOE, 2004). This number has increased further to 1667 pre-school centres in 2010/2011. These centres contained 6617 classes, which included 117,653 children and 11,431 teachers and 2247 administrators (MOE, 2012a). Therefore, the need for highly qualified kindergarten teachers was obvious, especially in view of the declaration from the Saudi government that 40% of children who were of pre-school age should be enrolled in pre-school centres by the year 2010 (MOE, 2004). This commitment to expanding pre-school provision is consistent with international trends and aspirations that are influenced by the Education for All goals (UNESCO, 2008).

There was no official curriculum of pre-school education before 1991/1992 in KSA. However, there was a comprehensive project for developing ECE in the country. In 1988, a co-operation agreement was concluded between the following organisations: the GPGE, the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organisation (AGPUND) and the UNESCO. It is worth mentioning that the preparing of The Developed Kindergarten Curriculum (DKC) lasted about four years. This project focused on two areas: the development of the kindergarten curriculum, and the establishment of four permanent training centres in four regions in KSA to train Saudi workers in kindergarten. The training programme there is aimed at giving in-service teachers practical information on how to implement the DKC (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). The trainers in these centres are experienced Saudi teachers who have received training for more than two years under qualified consultants to become professional trainers in the field of ECE (Swigh, 2000, cited in Gahwaji, 2006). Several empirical studies were conducted in these training centres, before the initial implementation of the DKC, to assure that it is appropriate for the pre-school children's learning and development, and Saudi social and cultural context (Gahwaji, 2006; Khomais, 2007).

Furthermore, several training centres were established, which concentrate on the practical aspects of the activities and lessons, to help Saudi pre-school teachers to understand the new curriculum and prepare them to put it into action. However, "This might happen without deep critical understanding of the curriculum framework and appropriate pedagogical strategies" (Khomais, 2007, p. 32). Consequently, there is a need for highly qualified kindergarten teachers, who studied on a Kindergarten Major with a four-year programme.

2.5.1 The Design of the Kindergarten Curriculum in Saudi Arabia

The first edition of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia was produced in 1992 under the main title "The Developed Kindergarten Curriculum"; the sub-title is "the self-learning". It was printed in seven books which contain the basic curriculum and ten subject units which should be followed by the teachers. The GPGE then decided that this curriculum, which was established on Islamic and Western theories and data on the educational development of pre-school children, should apply to kindergarten (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). Moreover, in 1997 there was a training guide produced for pre-school teachers, which includes all the training courses that were presented in the training centres during seven years (GPGE, 1997).

The GPGE subsequently received notes and suggestions on the DKC from the Saudi workers in kindergarten and some researchers who evaluated the DKC. For example, Maemar (1998) found that the teacher's manual book does not explain the method of self-learning clearly to the kindergarten teachers (Samadi and Marwa, 2006; Maemar, 1998). Also, Zamzami (2000) through her sample (220 pre-school educators) found that all the participants in the sample agree that the DKC meets the needs of pre-school children but they all perceived that there is a lack of educational activities (Zamzami, 2000). Therefore, there was interest from the GPGE regarding these notes and suggestions. These notes and suggestions were presented by the GPGE to experts in the field of ECE who were asked to evaluate the DKC, and they found that the main problem which faced the teachers during their application of the DKC was the lack of educational activities. For example, these teachers need to know how to teach young children the Alphabet in an appropriate way. The other problem is that the DKC teacher's manual book is not clear enough, and therefore the DKC needed to be reviewed (Samadi and Marwa, 2006; Gahwaji, 2006). The GPGE made a decision to

form a team of experts and ECE educators in order to solve these problems, namely, to amend and rewrite the DKC. The team added extra activities to the DKC unit's books and added more details to the DKC teacher's manual book to make it clear for the kindergarten teachers (Samadi and Marwa, 2006; Muneef, 1999).

Consequently, an approval was issued by the GPGE to implement this curriculum in a number of kindergartens. After its implementation, the curriculum was modified by this team in the light of the results reached. The GPGE then decided that this curriculum applies to all kindergarten officially (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). Thus, the second edition of this curriculum was produced in 2006 with apparent modifications and additions in the content of the detailed learning units. This second edition is issued under the title "The Self-Learning Curriculum for Kindergarten" and it is printed in seven books which put more emphasis on the self-learning concept as a framework for its implementation. The curriculum follows criteria which are: flexibility; play; freedom; human interaction; respect and appreciation of a child's identity and culture; knowledge and skills; and productive relationship with families. This curriculum is designed for those currently teaching young children and for those in the pre-service stage (Ibid, 2006). It is worth mentioning that translations from Arabic to English of certain kindergarten curriculum documents have been made by the researcher.

2.5.2 The Practical and Theoretical Framework of Kindergarten Curriculum in Saudi Arabia

The Self-Learning Curriculum for Kindergarten in KSA advocates a "focus on the child's own activity, where the child interacts with various educational materials and toys that are available in the educational environment, which helps the child to discover her/his own abilities and develop them in accordance with her/his own growth model" (Samadi and Marwa, 2006, p. 16). Self-learning means that children learn from their own self-initiated activities and are motivated by their needs to learn. This learning is useful and effective because it is consistent with the ways in which pre-school children learn, and which is driven by the child's interests and motivations according to his/her nature. The concept of self-learning is similar to the western concept of child-initiated activities. However, in the DKC there is more emphasis on the Islamic principles of the adult guiding and directing children's learning and

development, and acting as role models for the Islamic religious and social beliefs, where adults also reinforce and encourage appropriate behaviour. Moreover, the DKC focuses on the development of Islamic values: the principles of honesty; freedom of opinion; self-esteem; production and self-service and self-reliance (Samadi and Marwa, 2006).

In this curriculum, it is outlined for teachers how children learn according to the self-learning concept, as follows:

- The child learns through continuous training in the skills;
- The child learns through discovery and research;
- The child learns and develops from one stage to another in his/her own way according to the growth and development processes;
- The child learns through receiving knowledge and information from different sources (peers, adults, and books), in addition to his/her own experiences (Samadi and Marwa, 2006, p. 45).

In this respect, EC pedagogies are distinctive from those in primary or secondary schools because of the: age and prior experiences of children; focus on child development theory; emphasis on play and freedom to choose their activities; interactive pedagogical approaches "meeting the child's needs and interests"; flexible curriculum approaches (child and adult-led activities).

It is asserted in "The Self-Learning Curriculum for Kindergarten in KSA" that children's skills and practices are identified in five areas: (a) the religious area; (b) the mental intellectual area; (c) the physical and dynamic area; (d) the social area; (e) and the emotional area. Most of these skills and practices are developed and improved in children through organized activities contained in the self-learning curriculum, while some skills and practices do not have organized activities in this curriculum. Therefore, the designers of this curriculum state that the teacher should be aware that children learn by example, and then by fostering, and efforts must be invested in the appropriate situations for the development of these skills and practices (Samadi and Marwa, 2006).

According to the self-learning concept, the teacher's role in this curriculum is to meet the needs of each child, helping the child to find answers for the questions that emerge throughout their interactions with different things and materials in the world around them. The role of the teachers is prepare the educational environment that encourages children to test, make experiments and discover facts, properties, and relations of different things in the world … , and so on. (Samadi and Marwa, 2006).

In this curriculum, there is consideration for the development of reading and writing for children by providing more examples of literacy and numeracy activities, either within the content of the learning units or as appendices (Ibid, 2006).

2.5.3 The Content of the Kindergarten Curriculum in Saudi Arabia

As mentioned above, the kindergarten curriculum in KSA is organized in seven books. The first book is the teacher's manual, which aims to orient teachers on how to set the pre-school stage for children's learning and development. There are six chapters to the book: (1) educational principles and their application; (2) children's behaviour guidance (discipline methods); (3) organising the physical environment; (4) daily programme; (5) preparing the child for his/her first year in the pre-school; (6) planning and constructing of the educational unit for pre-school children. At the end of this book, there is an appendix of working papers for mathematics. Further brief explanation is provided for each chapter of teacher's manual book. Similar to other countries, national policy documents in KSA exert considerable influence on the pre- and in-service training of teachers.

The other six books contain ten learning units; five of these units provide guidance in detail, each in a separate book, on the subject of water, sand, food, home and hands. Each book includes the unit's objectives, concepts, required materials, and detailed explanation of unit's activities. These five books are designed to provide teachers with practical knowledge on how to facilitate children's learning and development, and the type of materials and environment which should be provided for children's learning and development.

The other five learning units are provided in brief and combined in one book (the seventh book) on the subject of friends, my health and safety, clothes, family, and my

book. Teachers can build the content of these learning units in line with the complete units' model to meet the needs, interests and developmental levels of children. It is worth mentioning that the activities and subject units in the kindergarten curriculum in KSA are not strictly structured methods, but flexible ideas and suggestions to promote creativity and initiative in teachers. This may help student-teachers in this study to apply their knowledge about childhood education effectively through the kindergarten curriculum. In contrast, some student-teachers may find this flexible approach quite challenging. It is stated in the teacher's manual book that the order of units during the year is flexible, the teacher should not adhere to the content of the activities which are provided as examples, and presenting the activities should be in accordance with the availability of materials and children's needs and interests.

The first chapter in the teacher's manual book "educational principles and their application" contains the conceptual and procedural framework that explain its principles and relates it to the Saudi educational policies and pre-school objectives. In KSA the main aim of pre-school education is to prepare children for life's diverse challenges through good moral upbringing on the basis of sound educational principles (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). The MOE in KSA set nine major objectives for pre-school education. These are consistent with the overall educational policy of KSA. The objectives are:

1. Protecting the instincts of children, looking after their moral, mental and physical growth in a natural environment similar to their family environment, and responsive to the requirements of Islam.
2. Composition of the child's religious trend based on belief in the oneness of God; this conforms to the child's instincts.
3. Teaching the child good behaviour and helping him/her to acquire the virtues and expected behaviours of Islam, by providing a good example for him/her at school.
4. Familiarising the child with the school atmosphere, preparing him/her for school life and transferring him/her gently from self-centredness to a social life shared with schoolmates.
5. Providing the child with a wealth of correct expressions and easily understood fundamental truths and information that suit his/her age, and are relevant to his/her surroundings.

6. Training the child in body exercises, teaching him/her sanitary habits, cultivating his/her senses, and training him/her to use them properly.
7. Encouraging the child's imaginative thinking, and opening the doors for his/her energies to blossom under guidance.
8. Meeting childhood's needs, making him/her happy and educating him/her, all without spoiling or burdening him/her.
9. Protecting the child against dangers, treating the early signs of bad behaviour, and facing childhood problems in an adequate way (Samadi and Marwa, 2006).

From the pre-school objectives, the kindergarten curriculum designers formulated the children's needs, which are considered to be the core of the self-learning curriculum. The children's needs are:

- Children need to know the concept of God's abilities;
- Children need to be appreciated for their abilities and their needs;
- Children need to be respected and be treated in a nice warm way in a similar environment to their homes to ensure their feeling of security;
- Children need to be guided by a qualified teacher who can give a good example of Islamic morals;
- Children need to establish a good relationship with other children and with adults;
- Children need to use language in a right way;
- Children need to understand concepts that are suitable to their ages and their needs,
- Children need to use all their senses in their play;
- Children need to practise good habits in a safe environment; and
- Children need to be creative in their way of expressing themselves (Samadi and Marwa, 2006).

There are many detailed examples for the teachers for each of these needs to help teachers meet these needs. Through the applications of teachers to meet these needs, it is expected that children will acquire the following knowledge, skills and dispositions:

- Children will build a good relationship with God, themselves, and with others whether their peers or adults.

- Children will be able to develop their skills such as classification, sequence, correspondence, matching, assembly, numeracy, literacy and creativity.
- Children will realise and use Arabic language to express themselves.
- Children will develop and enhance their small and large muscle skills.
- Children will learn to be dependent on themselves in many things.

The second chapter of the teacher's manual book "children's behaviour guidance" describes the characteristics and attributes of the kindergarten child. The designers of this curriculum assert that "knowing children's characteristics affects her decisions in the organizing the educational environment, in dealing with children, in choosing appropriate activities for children, and in guiding children's behaviours" (Samadi and Marwa, 2006, p. 63). This chapter provides the teacher with the appropriate discipline methods that work with children. It gives examples of the most common problems the teachers might face during their work with children (Ibid, 2006).

Another chapter in the teacher's manual "organising the physical environment" focuses on the organization of the children's classroom in the kindergarten and its preparation. It explains how the physical environment affects the children and provides the teacher with instructions on how to organise and equip the indoor and outdoor space. According to the self-learning curriculum in KSA, the learning environment of the kindergarten classroom should be arranged in corners, where each corner represents a specific activity with all its requirements. The learning activities should balance the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and language needs of the children, as well as the need for literacy and numeracy activities. This chapter provides full description of the organization of the classroom and the corners' various forms of arrangements and materials for the three kindergarten classroom levels (Kg1, Kg2 and Kg3). The main play and work corners are: books corner, blocks and building corner, dramatic play corner, comprehension corner, search and discovery corner, expressive art corner, and reading and writing corner. All of these corners are the main parts of the indoor space in addition to the outdoor space (Samadi and Marwa, 2006).

The fourth chapter in the manual "daily programme" explains how the self-learning curriculum is implemented through a daily programme, which is divided in five

periods as follows: circle time, outdoor free-play time, breakfast time, free-work time in corners, and last meeting time with teacher. This chapter provides full description and identification of the teacher's role and responsibilities in these periods, and also provides the teacher with detailed explanation of the objectives, contents, different techniques and pedagogies, and examples of materials used in a daily programme. A daily programme aims to accomplish four goals as follows: (1) it encourages self-learning; (2) it provides an opportunity for children to make choices and decisions in their learning; (3) it provides for many types of interaction; (4) it provides opportunity to work in a variety of environments (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). This daily programme varies between teacher-directed and free choice activities. However, the free activities (child-initiated activities) occupy longer times than teacher-directed activities as shown in Table 2.3. The times of the five periods of programme can be varied and they are left to the teacher's discretion in reference to the pre-school centre timing and according to her children's needs.

Table 2.3 Summary of specifications for the daily programme in kindergarten

The period	The time	Type of activity	Activity
Circle	30 minute	Teacher-directed activities & children's participation	Teacher presents a topic that is related to the unit's subject, sing different materials and display techniques. During presentation, the teachers should encourage children to participate and express their views and experiences
Outdoor free-play	45-60 minute	Children's choice (child-initiated activities) & teacher interferes to direct behaviour or to pay the learning process	Free play activities out of the classroom, in a range of indoor and outdoor playgrounds. Teacher is encouraged to participate in children's play
Breakfast	30 minute		Breakfast meal with teacher and children as a family
Free-work in corners	45-60 minute	Children's choice (child-initiated activities) & teacher interferes to direct behaviour or to enhance the learning process	Free play in classroom corners, with the least direction from teacher. Her role is to well-prepare corners, prevent and solve behavioural problems if occurred, observe and write reporting notes about children
Last meeting with teacher	30 minute	Teacher's directed activities in response to children's choice and preferences	Review of the day's activities, whole class relaxing activities according to the children's choice, such as stories, rhythms, finger play, and games

The fifth chapter of the teacher's manual book "preparing the child for his first year in the pre-school" describes the ways and methods that can be exploited to build a close relationship between the workers in kindergarten, and child and his/her mother, to provide the child with a smooth and comfortable transition to the school year, and then to create a healthy relationship based on the principle of participation and cooperation in child's rearing and learning. The teacher's role and responsibilities are fully described, providing her with a step-by-step explanation of configuring the relationship with the family before the start of the school year as well as throughout,

and the arrangements with the administration and colleagues at work to support the total growth of the child.

The last chapter in the teacher's manual "planning and constructing of the educational unit for pre-school children" provides the teacher with detailed explanation of the educational unit in terms of what it means, the principles to prepare educational unit, the steps applied for planning and constructing of the educational unit. There is a detailed example for planning and constructing of the educational unit "my kindergarten". Also, this chapter explains in detail how the teacher can assess children's learning and development across the KSA national curriculum.

Based on the previously stated description of the content of kindergarten curriculum in KSA, I aim to investigate content of the programme for the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers (subject matter and pedagogical strategies) and how this programme is consistent with the content of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has provided the context for this research, and focused on conception of ECE in KSA through giving an overview of pre-school education in KSA. It was clear that decision makers in MOE in KSA endeavour to develop KC which acknowledges the need for highly qualified kindergarten teachers. Despite the increasing number of kindergartens and children in these pre-school centres in KSA, there is insufficient national information about the characteristics of kindergarten teachers and ITE programmes in the field of ECE.

International research evidence provides a picture of the characteristics of high quality for ITE programmes. However, there is a lack of a current profile of professional preparation of kindergarten teachers in KSA, and no evidence of how they are prepared to teach young children in culturally appropriate ways in KSA. The current study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical research in the field of ECE programmes, especially in understanding kindergarten teacher preparation programmes, including information on knowledge and beliefs of pre-service kindergarten teachers. The next chapter will provide synopsis of professionals and

researchers' perspectives about TE programmes. In addition, it will review several research studies that are related to knowledge bases for teaching, and beliefs of teachers/student-teachers about teaching and learning. Both these perspectives and the research studies helped the researcher to construct knowledge related to the current study.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter aims to review the literature and previous research related to the area of the present study, particularly, definition of the term kindergarten, the characteristics of kindergarten teacher qualifications, and the aims of the early learning curricula at the kindergarten stage. Furthermore, the importance of kindergarten programmes is addressed. In addition, the chapter presents studies that show how TE programmes are structured, and what are considered by some researchers to be essential knowledge bases for teaching. Also, the chapter reviews the literature on how pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning are developed/changed during their preparation. The nature of the relationship between beliefs and knowledge, and the image of teacher/profession are discussed. It is worth to mention that most of the reviewed literature relevant to the ITE programmes, and knowledge and beliefs of pre and in-service teachers is from non-Arabic sources due to the lack of relevant studies in Arab countries. However, in this chapter there are sources that might have high cultural relevance but are smaller scale studies. The chapter then goes on to review the literature on some models/paradigms for ITE. Finally, there is review on research studies in KSA, and then this chapter concludes by outlining research on the theoretical framework of the study which is social-cultural theory.

3.1 Kindergarten

3.1.1 Definition of the Kindergarten Stage

The kindergarten stage is defined as being for young children, who are aged between three and six years. The educational phase is delivered according to the established curriculum, and after the child has finished this period he or she moves to a primary school to be registered in the first grade (Samadi and Marwa, 2006; British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2003). This definition is consistent with practice in KSA, in which "pre-school centres accept children" aged from three to six years (Gahwaji, 2006, p. 31).

3.1.2 Kindergarten Teacher Qualifications

In KSA, the teacher is involved in the pre-school education of children at the kindergarten stage. At this age, the child's characteristics must be taken into account, and the educational objectives must be those required by the national curriculum. In

common with established international approaches, the teacher manages and organizes carefully planned activities, whether inside or outside the classroom, encouraging the children to choose from offered opportunities for learning through play (Williams, 1999; Robson, 1996; Fleer, Anning and Cullen, 2004). The kindergarten teacher often displays a "deep and sound commitment" (Moyles, 2001, as cited in Gahwaji, 2006, p. 57) and she should have a variety of personal, social and educational qualifications that distinguish her from other stage teachers (Samadi and Marwa, 2006; BERA, 2003; Rust, 1993). Gahwaji (2006, p. 57) argues that the professional preparation of teachers in the field of ECE to acquire "the skills needed for their profession" is crucial. However, it is necessary that new students are attracted into this field. In KSA, the four years degree programme leads to the award of a Bachelor Degree in Education (Kindergarten Major). The participants (student-teachers) in this study will graduate with this degree (College of Education (COE), 2004).

3.1.3 The Aims of the Early Learning Curricula at the Kindergarten Stage

The MOE in KSA set nine major objectives for pre-school education which are consistent with the overall educational policy of KSA (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). These objectives are stated in chapter 2 (p. 39). Therefore, there are five areas of learning in the kindergarten curriculum in KSA: (a) the religious area; (b) the mental intellectual area; (c) the physical and dynamic area; (d) the social area; (e) the emotional area (Ibid, 2006). There are some similarities with curriculum frameworks in England and Northern Ireland, where the early learning curricula objectives are organised in six areas: (a) personal-social and emotional development; (b) communication - language and literacy; (c) mathematical development and education; (d) knowledge and understanding of the world; (e) physical development and physical education; and (f) creative development (Riley, 2007).

Although the objectives of pre-school education in KSA are based on the Islamic religion, it is contended that all these areas support learning at future stages, because they aim to build positive effects in children's lives through awareness towards others and cultural beliefs of the society. Also, they are considered very important for improving child development, understanding and knowledge (Ibid, 2007). Fleer et al.,

(2004) suggest that a quality early learning curriculum is established on the basis of interaction between children and their teachers. In addition, it is asserted that these curricula, with planned activities and high quality teaching, give the children who enter kindergarten many advantages. The relationship between excellent provision and positive outcomes has been the focus of research in a number of countries.

3.1.4 The Importance of Kindergarten Programmes

The early years of human life are considered the most important. The main long-term goal of the kindergarten stage is to prepare a strong generation which is able to be successful in adulthood. Such a goal could have a positive influence, not only in the social sphere, but also in the economic field. Giving considerable attention to, and investment in, high quality pre-school education will have positive social and economic benefits (Gahwaji, 2006). Young people are considered an essential element in improving our future (Samadi and Marwa, 2006), a future that is affected by rapid and significant changes in terms of national and global developments (social, economic, cultural and technological). Accordingly, it is argued that great attention should be focussed on the early or kindergarten stage, in order to develop these skills, knowledge and understanding, and to provide children with more confidence for later stages (COE, 2004; Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2007; Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1999).

In pre-school settings, children usually participate in different activities which may be child or adult-initiated, and will typically include some free choice and play (Wood and Attfield, 2005). These activities will lead to the discovery of a child's personality and abilities, such as his/her interests, skills, motivations and inclinations. Moreover, such activities help children to acquire different skills that are appropriate to the particular culture and traditions. These aspects include learning proper dialect or language, communication skills and the necessary manners (COE, 2004; Brooker and Broadbent, 2007).

There are several factors that should be considered in improving kindergarten teaching. An important one is that of providing qualified staff, most importantly teaching staff (Sylva et al., 2003). They should be adequately trained to be able to communicate with children, design and manage the curriculum, understand and assess

children's learning and development, and communicate with parents (Sylva et al., 2003). Such teachers are required to have specific pedagogical knowledge and skills in order to be able to accomplish the main objectives of the kindergarten stage. An example of a national project which argues that high quality pre-school education is associated with having well-qualified teachers in the settings, was the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project in England. This was the first major European longitudinal study of 3000 children between the ages of 3-7 years. The project took place over five years, from 1997 to 2003, and investigated the effects of pre-school education on young children's development and attainment from 3 or 4 years of age to entry into primary school (Ibid, 2003). The main findings of this research are related to the current study:

> *There was a significant relationship between the quality of a centre and improved outcomes for children. There was also a positive relationship between the qualification levels of the staff and ratings of centre quality. The higher the qualification of the staff, particularly the manager of the centre, the more progress children made. Having qualified trained teachers working with children in pre-school settings (for a substantial proportion of time, and most importantly as the pedagogical leader) had the greatest impact on quality, and was linked specifically with better outcomes in pre-reading and social development* (Sylva et al., 2003, p. 4).

Trepanier-Street, Adler and Taylor (2007, p. 337) assert that teachers professional preparation programmes in the field of ECE are increasing, and nowadays this field "is receiving new attention and interest". Therefore, it is important to design a specialized teacher education/training programme for kindergarten teachers. This programme can be prepared by experts in teaching young learners, and may be informed by the wider aspirations of the society. Such a programme may include other important issues related to context, such as the learners' religion, tradition and culture. Another important factor is to provide a suitable environment for learners and teachers. It has been proved that teaching in a well prepared environment encourages learning (COE, 2004; Samadi and Marwa, 2006).

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the establishment of a programme for training specialized teachers in the domain of pre-school education in a scientific structured way is crucial to improving the quality of preschool education in KSA.

3.2 Teacher Education Programmes

3.2.1 Structure of Teacher Education Programmes

Lanier and Little (1986) assert that educationalists must take into account four elements in teaching: teachers, students, the curriculum and the context. In addition, the academic and professional training/preparation of teachers should take into account the changing of discipline's curricula at schools (Brown and Mayor, 1961). Moreover, the global environment requires "teachers who are competent, effective, and dynamic in their orientation" (Ajiboye and Tella, 2007, p. 35). Thus, the contemporary national and international contexts raise questions about appropriate forms of teacher education for different age groups. Research in this field focuses on the significance of field experience, theoretical knowledge for teaching, and the influence of student-teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs. LaBoskey and Richert (2002) and Clark (2002) argue that the quality of learning in the field experience is considered a major element in teacher education. A study in Botswana by Moswela (2006, p. 623) focused on "the training needs of serving teachers for the enhancement of school performances". Teachers and head teachers were selected to complete the questionnaire and interviews were conducted with a few teachers and head teachers. He maintains that, "for teacher development programmes to achieve their intended goal of improving the teaching and learning processes, they should of necessity be based on the actual problems teachers encounter in the classroom" (Op. cit.). This implies a practical element throughout the programme, namely, from first year onwards.

It is accepted that teachers should be highly proficient in their subject before they enter the classroom (Ullmann and Hainsworth, 1991). This gives them self-confidence for classroom management. So, "teacher education programmes are interested in training teachers to manage their classrooms effectively" (Al-Karanseh, 2001, p. 79). Brownlee, Berthelsen, Irving, Boulton-Lewis and McCrindle (2000) posit that the aim of professional education programmes is to facilitate the construction of theoretical knowledge to ensure effective, professional practice. With regard to the relationship between knowledge and beliefs, Mansour (2008a, p. 1626) draws the conclusion that "beliefs controlled the gaining of knowledge and knowledge influenced beliefs". This suggests that learners should be encouraged to construct new beliefs about learning

and teaching, and to reconstruct more elaborate and inclusive knowledge in the light of the theoretical knowledge presented to them in their education programmes. This is because new student-teachers bring their prior knowledge and beliefs to their teacher-training programme (Horppu and Ikonen-Varila, 2004). These themes are evident in international studies of teacher education programmes.

In a study of forty-six student-teachers in primary education in England, Wray (1993, pp. 52, 72) asked his participants to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and the end of their course. This instrument aimed to measure the extent of student-teachers' knowledge of language, and how their beliefs about language and literacy education "change during the course of their teacher-training". The data obtained shows that developments in student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs "had been consonant with one another" and the course had had little effect on student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs about language and literacy. Bennett (1993) agrees with Wray (1993, p. 67) that this pattern in the changes which occurred during the period of the student-teachers' training course "may be related to the content of the course they had undertaken". This suggests that if courses/programmes of professional preparation do not adequately cover each academic subject and several aspects of professional skills and competence, the content and quality of teachers' education programmes will be not satisfactory (Bennett, 1993; Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), 1991). However, content coverage is not the only important factor in teacher education courses/programmes, as there is the 'time' element. It should be sufficient to ensure that student-teachers have understood the "knowledge of subjects, of curriculum, of learners and of assessment" (Bennett, 1993, p. 1). In the English context (DES, 1989, as cited in Bennett, 2003) student-teachers must study at least one subject for up to two years at standards appropriate to higher education. This should ensure that student-teachers are more likely to work with their pupils confidently. In Britain, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) carried out a survey of twenty courses for the training of primary teachers. Student-teachers complained about the balance of the courses. Too much time was allocated to some courses and some courses were much too short. Consequently, student-teachers' knowledge bases were poor (HMI, 1991). In KSA, the minimum requirement for the study in the pre-service teacher education programmes is at least two years to gain the Diploma degree in teaching, but most of ITE programmes require four years to gain the Bachelor degree (Ministry of Higher

Education (MOHE), 2012). In this study, the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers is for four years (COE, 2004).

In a diverse culture such as at the Hong Kong, the local Institute of Education created a programme which offers for student-teachers a number of opportunities to teach in schools. This is a Programme of Education (Primary) of the four-year, full-time Bachelor (B.Ed.) degree. The programme documents highlight the importance of practical experience, because it "reinforces the Professional Studies area of the programme with its modules on pedagogy, psychology, classroom management, and curriculum studies, as well as the Academic Studies area, where the student-teachers learn about the subject that they are going to teach" (Cheng, 2005, pp. 347-348). Cheng (2005) conducted a longitudinal study in which his participants were randomly sampled and involved over a three-year period. They were nine student-teachers who were enrolled in the four-year B.Ed. programme from 1998 to 2002. The aim of this study was "to analyse the learning of the student-teachers and the supporting teachers during the field experience period in the second and the final years of the programme and to explain this learning using a sociocultural view of learning" (Ibid, 2005, p. 347). Those student-teachers in their second year and in their final year of the programme were interviewed; also supporting teachers for each student-teacher was interviewed. In this study the professional development of student-teachers and the construction of knowledge in teaching were described. The main findings of this research were that the field experience had helped the student-teachers to obtain a better understanding of the role of a teacher. Also, student-teachers' professional competence developed in different ways during their field experience period. The findings suggest that "the student-teachers were concerned about ways of adapting the theories learnt in the programme to their own teaching context" (Cheng, 2005, p. 354). Regarding the supporting teachers, they "played an important role in helping the student-teachers learn to teach in the school context. Their support ranged from professional to personal areas" (Ibid, 2005, P. 359). Finally, as a result of the interactions between both the student-teachers and the supporting teachers in the field experience, there is a change or professional development for the supporting teachers that they become more innovative in their own classroom practice (Cheng, 2005).

With regard to the relationship between teachers' professional development programme and students' achievement, Nickerson and Brown (2006, p. 1) emphasized in their project, which was focused on "mathematics and mathematical pedagogy and connections to practice", that there are significant connections between teacher professional development and student achievement. This programme was run over a two-year period, and was offered to elementary school teachers in order to obtain a deeper understanding in their subject. The researchers offered twelve units of university courses, with six units in undergraduate mathematics courses, and another six in graduate teacher education courses. 90 teachers completed the 12 units in 2004. From analysis of the findings, the researchers suggested that "a program that focuses on connection between mathematics, pedagogy, and practice can support teachers in helping students better meet the standards of mathematics content knowledge" (Ibid, 2006, p. 2). In summary, these studies show that teacher education programmes should focus on pedagogical knowledge as well as subject knowledge in order to prepare student-teachers for teaching. However, there are ongoing debates about the balance between these areas, depending on the age range in which teachers specialise.

There is considerable argument about how new early childhood teachers are prepared and who is deemed best-qualified to teach new teachers (Young, Hall and Clarke, 2007). With regard to the content of teacher education programmes, the argument has been made as to "whether courses should provide specific practical solutions to specific practical problems or the knowledge teachers could use to solve problems on their own" (Lanier and Little, 1986, as cited in Dunne, 2003, p. 77). With regards to the relationship between professional skills and competence, HMI (1991) emphasized that in the structure of teacher education programmes there is the need for strong links between the theoretical components of the courses and the practical experiences with children. Cheng (2005) further claims that in the professional preparation programmes of student-teachers, there is a relationship between the coursework element and the field experience. On the other hand, when teachers teach in classrooms that encourage them to think about their teaching practice, it helps to establish a basis for teachers' professional behaviour (Isenberg, 1990). Horppu and Ikonen-Varila (2004) assume that when kindergarten teachers work in their classrooms in the care and education of young children, they are guided both by their experiences and by personal practical knowledge that has been generated as a result of formal education in teacher

education programmes. Sandholtz (2002) asserts that learning is a personal, reflective, and transformative process, where ideas, experiences and points of view are integrated and knowledge is created.

From this point of view, in order to enhance the student-teacher field experience element, it is necessary to have an understanding about what student-teachers learn in their programme (Cheng, 2005). A study in Slovene examined grammar and elementary teachers' perceptions of cooperative learning addressed this question, involving a sample of 543 Slovene elementary and grammar school teachers. One of the findings of this study supported "the critical opinion that teachers' experience depends not only on the quantity (years of experience), but also on the quality of experience" (Krecic and Ivanus Grmek, 2008, p. 59). Cheng (2005, p. 348) adds that the practice of teaching on its own is not sufficient to develop gradually student-teachers' understanding of the school context and their role as teacher, but there are some additional activities that could be introduced, such as arranging visits to a variety of schools and "school attachments" for the student-teachers.

Recent evidence suggests that the professional development of the student-teachers involves the following aspects:

> *Being psychologically prepared to be a teacher, understanding the role of a teacher, developing a sense of responsibility, refining teaching strategies, and reflecting and improving practices. The school context shapes this process of professional development with influences from the behaviour of the pupils, the different needs and abilities of the pupils, the school administration practices, and the involvement of the student-teachers in other activities in the school* (Cheng, 2005, p. 354)

In this regard, Haynes (2000) and Cullen (1999) argue that teachers who will work with pre-school children need an adequate knowledge of subjects and an understanding of pedagogical strategies. Hickey (2011, p. 140) in his work, looking at improving individual motivation by looking beyond it, noted that: "social and technological contexts are seen as a fundamental part of learned knowledge". Also, it is asserted by Almas and Nilsen, (2006, p. 469) that: "student teachers must receive training in the pedagogical use of ICT for use in their subsequent careers". This will lead to teachers being more confident about teaching the pre-school curriculum and being aware of children's interests, ideas and questions (Anning and Edwards, 1999).

Such an approach demands that teacher preparation programmes should take into account how they can assist student-teachers to build up a range of knowledge in different areas in ways which will enable them to think critically and to reflect on their behaviour (Zeichner, 1986). It has been claimed that programmes should encourage teachers' critical thought, reinforce "teachers' self-esteem, and increase their awareness of student' needs" (Atay, 2006, p. 1). Barnes (1989) further argues that the need to build stronger teacher education programmes highlights broad questions about how student-teachers become teachers and how they learn to teach.

In the Netherlands, a study focused on teachers' beliefs about mentoring and their learning to teach process when being supervised by a mentor during their teaching practice (Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt, 2001). The participants were thirty student-teachers at Leiden University, who graduated in numerous academic disciplines. Those participants were attending a one-year postgraduate teacher education programme. This programme consisted of both theoretical and practical courses, and student-teachers were interviewed in a separate and quiet room at the teacher education institute through their second practical training period. All interviews were "by the same interviewer, who was not a member of the teaching staff" (Ibid, 2001, p. 63). The following extract summarises how those student-teachers were prepared in their programme to become teachers and how they learn to teach through those modules:

> *During the theoretical module, student teachers acquired knowledge about teaching methods and educational theory, and they practised their teaching skills at the teacher education institute. During their practical training in the classrooms, student teachers observed lessons given by their mentors, had the opportunity to give lessons themselves, and discussed these lessons with their mentors. The students received their practical training at two different schools. They were being trained to teach at the high school level (pupil age 15–18) in one specific subject area of language (Dutch, English, German, French, classics), science (mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry), or social science (history, art history, social studies)* (Ibid, 2001, pp. 62-63).

The study concluded that student-teachers' beliefs about mentoring were very similar to mentors themselves. Six mentor roles were derived from the data analysis including providing support and encouraging of student-teacher, giving advice and suggestions, evaluating of a student-teacher's lessons, stimulating a student-teacher to think about his/her own lessons, preparing a student-teacher for school life, and one-third of

participants in this study put their mentors role in perspective where they claimed that mentors were not 'the only role models' for their learning to teach (Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt, 2001, p. 76). Other role models, as these student-teachers believed, were student activities. Four categories of these activities were identified: (1) self-regulating the learning process where student-teachers take initiative for discussing their lessons with their mentors to guide them; (2) observing a mentor's teaching style; (3) asking why-questions in response to the observations of their teaching; (4) and thinking about own lessons (Ibid, 2001). A third of those participants believed that their thinking about their teaching was critical where they tried to define their teaching's strengths and weakness, they attempted to discover the reasons behind that, and yet they suggested convenient solutions (Ibid, 2001). Several studies indicated that novice teachers in their initial teaching encounter problems in their work context, and they are concerned about themselves and their students (Erkmen, 2010). These problems occur as a result of: "not being supported by colleagues, classroom management problems, insufficient training and mismatch between teachers' own beliefs and school expectation" (Ibid, 2010, p. 40).

3.2.2 Knowledge Bases for Teaching

Many researchers have asserted the importance of student-teachers' professional preparation, they claimed that there are various categories of teachers' professional knowledge (Elbaz, 1983; Shulman, 1987; Wilson, Shulman and Richert, 1987; Calderhead, 1988; Grossman, 1990; Rodgers and Raider-Roth, 2006; Abdelhafez, 2010). Al-Karanseh (2001) showed that for student-teachers to be able to teach their pupils effectively they must attain different forms of knowledge during their professional preparation programmes. These include: subject matter knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; knowledge of classroom management; and knowledge of learners. Such programmes require attention and concern for "how the theory of teaching and learning can be put into practice" (Ibid, 2001, p. 2). Al-Karanseh's study (2001) was conducted on the participants' perspectives of initial social studies teachers' preparation in Jordan. The researcher used interviews and a questionnaire to obtain these perspectives about the teaching and learning in both theory and practice of social studies. The sample was 30 participants, including 18 student-teachers who were at the end of their study programme, 6 professors, 3 university supervisors and 3 mentors. Those participants were associated with social

studies teacher education programmes in three universities. The researcher selected those student-teachers who were at the last term of the four year programme and they were at the end of their teaching practice, because the aim of this study "was not to investigate parts of the preparation programme but to look at the programme of teacher preparation as a whole" (Al-Karanseh, 2001, p. 2). The results revealed lack of management "in each component of the programme, both in universities and schools. Leadership roles and responsibilities are unclear and the system seems to be reliant on historical custom and practice" (Ibid, 2001, p. 94). In addition, participants' knowledge about teaching and learning did not translate into their actual practice. This means that there is gap between what student-teachers know and what they do for their pupils in teaching practice (Ibid, 2001). Bennett (1993) argues that trained teachers must obtain sufficient subject knowledge in their specialist core subjects to teach and assess children across the national curriculum. Moreover, Armento (1996, p. 53) claims that "teachers can integrate their knowledge, skills and dispositions to create learning environments that help children create meaning in their lives". Finally, Lichtenstein, McLaughlin and Knudsen (1992) and Dadds (1995) observe that increasing teachers' knowledge is correlated with their increased confidence in the classroom. Therefore, the quality of pre-school education will be improved when teachers in EC field receive "education and training" which is "specifically related" to EC (Bowman, et al., 2001, as cited in Gahwaji, 2006, p. 73). This highlights the important role of teacher preparation programmes, which equip student-teachers "not only with basic classroom competence but with the knowledge, skills and confidence to continue learning" (Calderhead, 1988, p. 63).

One important element in teaching is a teacher's belief toward the subject (Samuelsson, 2007). A study about student-teachers' experiences with math education in Sweden used a sample of 197 education student-teachers who were studying to prepare for teaching math in early elementary school. This study showed that approximately 80 percent of participants interviewed had "negative emotions toward math, and may see the subject as a set of rules of skills" (Ibid, 2007, p. 1). Significantly, these beliefs may affect student-teachers' teaching in the future (Samuelsson, 2007).

There is no doubt that experiencing teaching practice helps future teachers to analyze and refine or reconsider some previous concepts and beliefs which they bring with them to this stage (Medina and Jose, 2005). Although it has been claimed that good teachers in their subjects are not necessarily teachers with a strong background, there is an argument that the vital concept of the process of learning to teach is how student-teachers' knowledge is "developed and used" (Calderhead, 1988, pp. 57-61). Student-teachers in their education programme must take into account this conception (Ibid, 1988). Davies (2008, p. 4) asserts that for initial early years teachers to become 'good' teachers takes several years to discover and learn. This means that it does not happen immediately during or after pre-service teacher education, but through "a process of learning that generally begins with formal teacher education preparation and progresses through a many years of experiences with many children in many classrooms" (Ibid, 2008, p. 4). Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) assert that it is important for teachers in maintaining "presence" in teaching and learning to grasp varied forms of knowledge:

> *In order for the teacher to be free to be present learning, it is necessary to have a deep knowledge of the subject matter, children and learning and a repertoire of pedagogical skills (from classroom management to lesson planning to curriculum design to design and execution of appropriate activities)* (Rodgers and Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 279).

Shulman (1987) draws seven knowledge bases that pre-service teachers need in order to teach effectively. Consequently, this may help teacher-educators to think about this knowledge to be included in ITE programmes. Table 3.1 shows Shulman's model of knowledge bases for teaching:

Table 3.1 Shulman's model of knowledge bases for teaching

Knowledge base	Characteristics
Content knowledge	The amount and organisation of knowledge in the mind of the teacher. This includes both substantive and syntactic structures of a subject, i.e., the variety of ways in which the basic concepts and principles of the discipline are organised, and the ways in which truth or falsehood, validity or invalidity, are established
General pedagogical knowledge	With special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that appear to transcend subject matter
Curriculum knowledge	With particular grasp of the materials and programmes that serve as 'tools of the trade' for teachers
Pedagogical-content knowledge	That form of content knowledge that embodies the aspect of content most germane to its teachability. It includes, for any given subject, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations and demonstrations. In other words, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others
Knowledge of learners and their characteristics	Knowledge of pupils' social and cultural backgrounds, knowledge of how children learn
Knowledge of educational contexts	Ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of schools, to the character of communities and cultures
Knowledge of educational ends	Purposes and values, and the philosophical and historical grounds

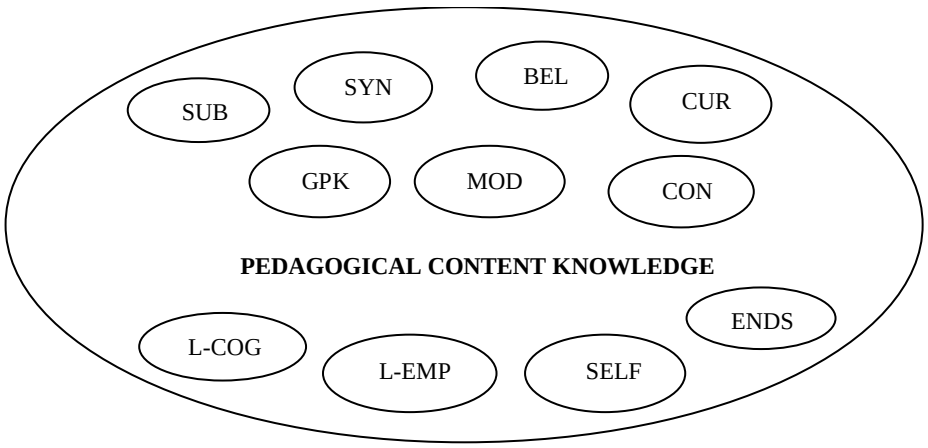
*** Martin, 2005, p. 42**

Calderhead (1988) assumes that the knowledge bases for teaching of student-teachers must be: knowledge of subject matter; curriculum; materials; context; teaching methods and children. He argues that "the translation of subject matter knowledge into practice requires interaction between this knowledge and other knowledge such as that concerning children or teaching strategies" (Ibid, 1988, p. 57). In contrast, Wilson et al., (1987) propose seven categories of teacher knowledge which are based on Shulman's (1987) work on knowledge bases for teaching: knowledge of subject matter; knowledge of pedagogy; knowledge of curriculum; knowledge of learners and learning; knowledge of educational contexts; pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of education philosophies. "These areas of knowledge are important constituents of competent teaching", maintains Bennett (1993, p. 12). Al-Karanseh (2001) argues that teacher education programmes should focus on developing student-teachers' understanding of all of these areas, to enable them to interact and manage their teaching practice. Conversely, Moyles, Adams and Musgrove (2002) and COE (2004) assert that the starting point in teaching practice in child's learning in EC stage

is that student-teachers should have understanding of child development: physically; emotionally; personally; socially; psychologically; mentally; religiously and intellectually. Importantly, those student-teachers should have adequate knowledge about child's needs and how child learns.

Following Shulman's model of knowledge bases for teaching (Shulman, 1987), many studies (see, for example Rovegno, 1992) found that both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) affect teachers' practice at classroom. However, there are some who criticised Shulman's model. For example, Turner-Bisset (1999) was not satisfied with Shulman's model and presented an alternative model of knowledge bases for teaching (Figure 3.1), in which she believes that it is a 'more comprehensive model'. In this model, she considers "*substantive knowledge, syntactical knowledge* and *beliefs about the subject* are all aspects of content knowledge, or subject matter knowledge" (Turner-Bisset, 1999, p. 43).

Figure 3.1 Turner-Bisset's model of knowledge bases for teaching



(Turner-Bisset, 1999, p. 47)

Key to codes
SUB – Substantive Knowledge
SYN – Syntactic Knowledge
BEL – Beliefs about the Subject
CUR – Curriculum Knowledge
CON – Knowledge of Contexts
SELF – Knowledge of Self
MOD – Knowledge/Models of Teaching
L-COG – Knowledge of Learners: Cognitive
L-EMP – Knowledge of Learners: Empirical
ENDS – Knowledge of Educational Ends
GPK – General Pedagogical Knowledge
PCK – Pedagogical Content Knowledge
* (**Turner-Bisset, 1999, p. 47)**

Turner-Bisset's views are different from Shulman's ideas about the notion that there is a distinction between content knowledge and PCK. Turner-Bisset found that "it was impossible to distinguish between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge; in the act of teaching, all knowledge was presented pedagogically in some way" (Turner-Bisset, 1999, p. 42). However, Parker (2004) suggests that student-teachers need to be aware of the subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in order to understand how these knowledge bases relate together to be PCK. Within this model, Turner-Bisset divided knowledge of learners into two aspects: cognitive and empirical, and also presented a 'knowledge of self' which was not presented in Shulman's model. In this sense, some educationalists (see, for example Elbaz, 1983; Lampert, 1984; McIntyre, 1992) suggested that 'knowledge of self' is an important knowledge base for teaching. Turner-Bisset (1999, p. 46) believes that the knowledge of self "should be added to the categories of knowledge for teaching". It is "an important requisite for reflection at the higher levels" in which student-teachers may have ability to reflect on their own practice; in turn this reflection impacts on student-teachers' professional development (Ibid, 1999, p. 46).

In the Arabic context, a study was conducted to investigate the professional practical knowledge of English foreign language experienced teachers in Egypt. This study revealed six core areas of teacher knowledge: "subject matter, pedagogy, students, classroom learning environment, curriculum, and self" (Abdelhafez, 2010, p. 137). Also, the findings of this study indicated the sources that shaped the professional practical knowledge of teachers: experience, ITE, in-service training, feedback from the school community (student and peer feedback), expert advice, student output and postgraduate study (Ibid, 2010). The participants were expected to relate these sources to teaching in general, not just to teaching of English (Abdelhafez, 2010). Regarding the relationship between teacher knowledge and practice, the study revealed that it was reflected in two ways: "the first was that teacher knowledge represented an operative model which underpinned practice. The second was that it informed the classroom decisions" (Ibid, 2010, p. 2).

It is suggested by Lortie (1975) that teacher preparation and classroom teaching practices contribute to the development of pedagogical content knowledge, while disciplinary knowledge in teacher preparation helps to develop curricular and subject

matter knowledge between student-teachers (Lortie, 1975). Baratz-Snowden (1990, p. 20) illustrates that one of the standards of professional teaching is that "teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students". Shafer (2004, p. 26) stated that PCK "involves knowledge about how ideas might be represented to students and how students learn what they find difficult". In this sense, Calderhead (1987, p. 109) summarised the nature of PCK, in which, it is different to subject content knowledge:

> *... the ability to represent the subject matter is an important aspect of an individual's subject matter knowledge. If teachers want to develop understanding in their students, they must be concerned with the representations students develop in their effort to comprehend the content of instruction. To facilitate the development of powerful, appropriate representations, teachers need to evaluate their own understanding of the subject matter* (Calderhead, 1987, as cited in Martin, 2005, p. 42).

Although Bennett (1993) argues that subject matter knowledge is considered important and one of the goals of the teacher education programme, Shulman (1987) emphasizes that if we focus on subject-matter knowledge more than other areas of teacher knowledge, we do not prepare student-teachers in appropriate ways. This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of ECE, where the emphasis on subject matter needs to be placed alongside knowledge of learning and development, and of an appropriate curriculum and pedagogies. In this respect, Martin (2005, p. 54) stated that "if subject matter is taught without the knowledge of how to transform it into forms that are understandable to children, then the teaching will be ineffective". Within these knowledge bases, Summers and Kruger believe that:

> *Development of content knowledge by itself is not sufficient to guarantee any substantial improvement in the quality of classroom teaching. It is also necessary to identify appropriate pedagogical content knowledge in relation to the particular ideas and concepts being taught* (Summers and Kruger, 1994, p. 517).

Ferrini-Mundy, Burrill and Schmidt (2007, p. 311) focused their work on two aspects of teacher education: "the content knowledge of teachers and a well-articulated coherent curriculum". The aim of this work was firstly, building teacher capacity to teach mathematical curricular goals significantly, and secondly, to establish how the teachers' perception of the structure of mathematics affect the ways they teach. Also, in this work a large-scale project based at Michigan State University for the implementation was described. The result from this study about mathematics teachers' professional development through initiated lesson studies in Indonesia in the period of

the year 2001-2003, Marsigit (2007, p. 141) indicates that "there are improvements of the practice of secondary mathematics teaching learning processes in term of teaching methodology, teacher competencies, students achievements, alternative evaluation, teaching learning resources and syllabus". However, the researcher adds that there are still many things to be done in order for mathematics teachers develop their professional competence. Teachers need to innovate teaching learning processes which meet their student' academic needs. Therefore, they develop a variety of teaching strategies, teaching materials, teaching evaluation and encourage their students to be active learners. Regarding developing teaching learning methods, the teachers need to plan their teaching setting, plan activities of their students, plan their roles, "distribute the assignments, develop assessment methods, and monitor the progress of students' achievements" (Ibid, 2007, p. 143). Finally, teachers who participated in this study suggested that it is necessary that professional development programmes are built on teachers' needs. Consequently, these needs should be assessed prior to the programmes (Marsigit, 2007).

It is suggested by Calderhead and Robson (1991) that the development of student teachers' knowledge about teaching requires that teacher-educators create training activities, in which student teachers' knowledge is examined carefully and challenged. Consequently, it is necessary in professional preparation to have some understanding of the nature and development of student teachers' professional knowledge (Ibid, 1991, p. 8). In Singapore, a study was conducted on the development of Mathematics Pedagogical Content Knowledge (MPCK) of the Diploma in Education student-teachers at the National Institute of Education during their preparation programme (Lim-Teo, Chua, Cheang and Yeo, 2007). The sample was all student-teachers who were enrolled in this programme in 2003. Approximately 80 student-teachers began the study, reducing to 67 student-teachers. The instrument used consisted of 16 items to examine the development of beginning primary school teachers' MPCK. The participants had two tests: the pre-test was administered in July 2003 through their orientation period, and the post-test was conducted in February 2005 when student-teachers finished their methodology course, and "just before they embarked on their final teaching practice stint". The findings illustrate that at the beginning of this programme student-teachers' MPCK were generally not strong. However, there was significant development of their MPCK when student-teachers completed their

mathematics pedagogy course. This improvement was "effected by the 6 modules (144 hours) of mathematics-related courses…, the generic education courses (another 120 hours), as well as the first teaching practice experience" (Lim-Teo, Chua, Cheang and Yeo, 2007, p. 243). In addition to subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, research on teacher preparation also highlights the influence of students' beliefs and prior knowledge on their development (Mansour, 2008a; Wray, 1993; Horppu and Ikonen-Varila, 2004; Bennett, 1993; Martin, 2005).

3.2.3 Student-teachers' Beliefs about Teaching and Learning

Beliefs have been defined as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 1996, p. 103). Also, beliefs are defined as "an integrated system of personalized assumptions about the nature of the subject, the students, learning, and teaching" (Shafer, 2004, p. 27). In this sense, Table 3. 2 shows five areas of teachers' beliefs that have been summarised by Calderhead (1996) of studies which investigated teachers' beliefs:

Table 3.2 Five areas of teachers' beliefs

Belief area	Characteristics
Learners and learning	Teachers' beliefs about how their students learn is likely to be influential on how they approach teaching tasks and their relationships with their students.
Teaching	Teachers' beliefs about the purposes of teaching. Is teaching a process of transmitting knowledge? Or is it about facilitating and guiding students' learning? Or is it about building social relationships?
Subject	How teachers view the subject.
Learning to teach	Teachers' beliefs about professional development
Self and the teaching role	Teachers' beliefs about their teaching roles and how these beliefs shape their classroom practise.

*** Calderhead, 1996, as cited in Erkmen, 2010, p. 30**

It has been claimed that since beliefs themselves are unobservable, then research on beliefs is difficult to obtain (Harste and Burke, 1977). It is difficult because of the problem of "how to get inside teachers' heads to describe their knowledge, beliefs and values" (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986, as cited in Bennett, Wood and Rogers, 1997, p. 24). Therefore, the understanding and the interpretation of kindergarten student-teachers' beliefs in this study will be significant.

One researcher reported that "teachers can make significant changes in their teaching behaviour after only 10 hours of training" (Sparks, 1984, as cited in Pehkonen, Torner, 1999, p. 261). However, the changing of beliefs during adulthood may be a relatively scarce phenomenon. Deering (1997) maintains that all student-teachers who enter a teacher education programmes have at least 18 years of life experiences and it is a difficult process to change their belief systems or their behaviours which already have been formed. Moreover, he adds that changing those beliefs and behaviours is a slow process. This claim must be realized by educationalists to play a role in the process of change, although they are considered "one of many forces at work" which affect this process (Ibid, 1997, p. 348). So, researchers cannot study teachers' thinking or beliefs in isolation from their social and professional context (Mitchell and Marland, 1989; Mansour, 2008a). In this regard, Mansour (2008a) argues that it is better in teacher education programmes to move toward a "conceptual change" approach "where teacher experiences and beliefs are taken as the starting point for introducing new concepts or pedagogies" (Mansour, 2008a, p. 1629).

Trepanier-Street, Adler and Taylor (2007), claim that beliefs about child development of those who work with pre-school children are correlated with practice. Although 'belief' does not necessarily reflect the nature of reality, many researchers argue that teachers' perceptions and judgments are influenced by their beliefs, in which their behaviour in the classroom will be strongly affected by those beliefs. Consequently, understanding the belief structure of teachers and student-teachers is necessary to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices (Pajares, 1992; Brookhart and Freeman, 1992; Wilson, 1990). Pajares suggested that there is "a strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their planning, instructional decisions, and classroom practices" (Pajares, 1992, p. 326). In spite of this claimed relationship, it is not an easy task to understand the reality of such a relation. This difficulty pertains to the fact that researchers dealt with these beliefs based on their 'own agenda' with a little consideration of the other embedded 'belief subconstructs' or the interrelated 'cognitive or affective structure' (Ibid, 1992, p. 326).

Turner-Bisset (1996) showed in her research about subject matter knowledge and teaching competence "how student-teachers' beliefs about the nature of the subject had an effect on their teaching" (Turner-Bisset, 1996, p. 44). It was suggested that

teacher uses ‘mental pictures’ of teaching activities. These pictures reflect teachers’ beliefs about teaching practice (Elbaz, 1983). Dunne (2003) claimed that there are many beliefs about teaching that are related to classroom practice and that these could change with actual experience of teaching in classroom contexts. However, in a study conducted by Deford (1985) to determine teachers’ beliefs about practices in reading instruction, the researcher argued that it was difficult to demonstrate which teachers’ behaviours were influenced by their beliefs.

Schommer (1990) conducted her study in the area of effects of beliefs about the nature of knowledge on comprehension. Two questions were addressed in this study to explore students’ beliefs about the nature of knowledge and their effect on comprehension. These questions were “What are students’ beliefs about the nature of knowledge?” and “How do these beliefs affect comprehension?” (Ibid, 1990, p. 498). The participants were 117 junior college students and 149 university students; the numbers of men and women were approximately equal. The researchers concluded in this study that students’ beliefs are “influenced by home and educational background” (Ibid, 1990, p. 503). Therefore, students’ comprehension and learning were influenced by these beliefs. This finding is consistent with research by Wilson (1990), and Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990) that the beliefs about teaching and learning are established during the years which students spent at school. Mansour (2008a) interviewed and observed ten teachers in Egypt, using an interpretive approach and a social-cultural constructivist perspective to understand the role of teachers’ experience through socio-Islamic culture in relation to their beliefs and practices. “The research was guided by teachers’ interpretations of their experiences related to teaching science through Science-Technology-Society (STS) issues” (Mansour, 2008a, p. 1605). This study confirmed that the experiences and personal religious beliefs of Egyptian science teachers shaped their beliefs and their identities, and affected their orientations and practices about STS in their classroom. This study also agrees with Wood’s (1987) finding, according to which teachers bring their experiences to the teacher education/training programmes, and the place in which they work. In addition, the findings showed that there is a “dynamic relationship between teachers’ identity, religious experiences, and pedagogical beliefs and practice” (Mansour, 2008a, p. 1629). Moreover, the study claimed that most religious experiences of teachers related “to teaching controversial issues were from informal sources (family, previous

teachers, the media, etc.)" (Mansour, 2008a, p. 1629). Thus, according to Mansour (2008a), personal religious beliefs of teachers and student-teachers are a very important element. It is important, therefore, that decision makers and educationalists take into account the religious beliefs, because of their possible positive or negative on the outcomes in the educational process. It can be concluded that the understanding of in-service or pre-service teachers' religious experiences is necessary for teacher education (Ibid, 2008a).

Dunne's study (2003) was conducted on student-teachers' general beliefs about teaching and learning. The sample was 100 primary student-teachers, and the researcher used statements in two Likert scales to measure the change in these beliefs between the beginning and end of the course. The first scale investigated beliefs about the aims of teaching, whereas the second scale illustrated beliefs about education issues. The researcher concluded that although little change in the beliefs themselves was apparent, especially for the teaching aims scale, "there was a great deal of change in the understanding of how these beliefs relate to practice" (Dunne, 2003, p. 87). In addition, the researcher indicated that these changes may mean a change in student-teachers' orientations or a change in their "underlying philosophy", which may have an impact on their practices. However, this change did not necessarily lead to improved practice. Therefore, their performances in the classroom as teachers will be influenced by these orientations (Ibid, 2003, p. 87).

There are studies of teachers' beliefs which illustrate that the experiences which face teachers throughout their teaching lives constitute a very important element in shaping their beliefs and the way they teach (Clark and Peterson, 1986; Richardson, 1996, Shafer, 2004). According to Dunne (2003, p. 75) "educational beliefs and values are inevitably dependent on the general politico-social environment of the time and the place in which they are set". As Raban-Bisby (1995) argues:

> *Our beliefs concerning teaching and learning will influence our practice whether these beliefs are explicitly held or implicit. They will influence how we behave towards the pupils we teach, how we organize our school and our classrooms and the ways in which we choose to organize our time* (Raban-Bisby, 1995, as cited in Bennett et al., 1997, p. 57).

Knowles (1992) makes the claim that teachers' beliefs are influenced by many elements, such as events throughout their lifetimes, experiences and people who are in

their lives. Shulman (1987) identifies four major sources for teachers' beliefs: accumulation of content knowledge, educational materials and structures, formal teacher education and teaching practice experiences. Richardson (1996) posits that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning come from many sources, including personal experience, experience with schooling and instruction, and formal knowledge about teaching and learning. Moreover, teachers' beliefs about curriculum, student and schooling processes will be also shaped by these experiences (McGillicuddy-De Lisi and Subramanian, 1996). In this respects, Shafer (2004, p. 27) also states that "beliefs are shaped by the teacher's prior experience as a student". Erkmen (2010, p. 29) suggested that teachers' beliefs "come from their prior learning experiences as students, and teacher education courses". So, building student teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning during their professional preparation programmes is crucial. This is because it is asserted that in their professional work these learners will be guided by their beliefs about teaching and learning in their planning, their decision-making and their behaviour in classroom management and pedagogical strategies (Dunne, 2003; Brownell and Pajares, 1999; Bennett et al., 1997; Isenberg, 1990). Student-teachers should be aware of this impact; there is relationship between beliefs and classroom behaviour (Dunne, 2003). It is stated that a "teacher's beliefs have a profound impact on classroom practice" (Shafer, 2004, p. 27).

These studies focused on the preparation of primary and secondary school teachers. However, teaching young children requires a particular knowledge base, which is likely to vary according to different cultural contexts. For example, a study by Bennett et al., (1997) focused on EC teachers' thinking and classroom practice. One of the principle aims of this study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' theories and their classroom practices. Nine reception class teachers cooperated with researchers throughout the whole of the 1994/5 school year, and three of them were the subject of detailed case studies. The data illustrated that "the teachers' theories influence their general teaching orientations through curriculum structures and classroom processes". Their theories about young children's teaching and learning came from many sources: "their personal and professional experience, teacher education courses and personal life philosophies" (Ibid, 1997, p. 56).

There is limited research available about the role of academic study in teachers' professional education (Williams, 2005). Isenberg (1990, p. 322), observed that "the relationship between teachers' thinking and beliefs and practice is attracting increasing attention". So, continued research on teacher beliefs is needed. According to Pajares (1992, p. 307), research on teacher beliefs requires "clear conceptualizations, careful examination of key assumptions, consistent understandings and adherence to precise meanings, and proper assessment and investigation of specific belief constructs". Mansour (2008a) noted that most research on beliefs in general, and on teachers' beliefs in particular, has been conducted in Western contexts, rather than in Islamic cultural contexts. It is claimed therefore that research on student-teachers' beliefs is considered a relatively new and undeveloped field in Arab contexts (Abdelhafez, 2010; Alzaydi, 2010; Kamil, 2011; Ahmed, 2011).

3.2.4 The Relationship between Beliefs and Knowledge

Research studies on student-teachers focus on understanding the nature of the relationship between beliefs and knowledge, as well as the relationship between student- teachers' beliefs or their knowledge on the one hand and their behaviours on the other hand. Pajares (1992) asserted that there is general distinction between beliefs and knowledge: beliefs are based on perspective and evaluation, whereas "knowledge is based on objective fact" (Ibid, 1992, p. 313). Beliefs "play a critical role in defining behaviour and organizing knowledge and information" (Pajares, 1992, p. 328). Other researchers claimed that there are valid reasons why attempting to understand the educational beliefs of pre-service teachers is necessary to teacher education programs, because these beliefs play a vital role in pre-service teachers' knowledge acquisition, their interpretation of knowledge and course content, subsequent teaching behaviour, assignment definition and selection, and "comprehension monitoring" (Pajares, 1992, pp. 313-328; Schommer, 1990). Erkmen (2010) guessed the reasons for the inconsistency between beliefs and teaching behaviour are due to the following:

> *The teachers may not have the sufficient knowledge and skills to implement the teaching method that they believe would be effective… Another reason … can be culture, contextual constraints or education system* (Erkmen, 2010, p. 33).

Mansour (2008c, p. 118) indicates that "teachers' beliefs are knowledge, experience, and [are] environment-based". It is suggested that student-teachers' educational beliefs perform a very important role in the gaining of knowledge and interpretation

of teaching behaviour (Thomas, Pedersen and Finson, 2001). In this sense, Pehkonen and Pietila (2003) stated that beliefs represent some sort of implicit knowledge. Also, they concluded that some researchers see beliefs as a part of knowledge, and others see beliefs to be part of conceptions (Ibid, 2003). Moreover, they stated that these beliefs could shape "one part of an individual's meta-cognition" (Ibid, 2003, p. 2). Thus, Pajares (1992, p. 328) maintains that such studies on beliefs in terms of teacher practices or student outcomes require longitudinal studies to examine "how beliefs affect pre-service teachers' own cognitive and affective outcomes".

An interesting conclusion of one study suggested that "beliefs influence what teachers say outside the classroom, but their behaviour in the classroom is a result of beliefs … being filtered by experience. Knowledge … represents efforts to make sense of experience" (Roehler, Duffy, Herrmann, Conley and Johnson, 1988 as cited in Pajares, 1992, p. 312). In other words, knowledge is an attempt to understand experiences in general terms and so beliefs are less influential in decision-making than actual experiences. Nespor's study (1987, p. 317) was conducted on the structures and functions of teachers' beliefs. Eight teachers in three schools participated in this programme for two years. The participants "were interviewed for a total of approximately 20 hours", and the researcher used videotape "over the course of a semester". This study has found that belief systems are different from knowledge system. As Nespor (1987) argued:

> *Beliefs are basically unchanging, and, when they change, it is not argument or reason that alters them but rather a "conversion or gestalt shift" (p. 321). Knowledge systems are open to evaluation and critical examination; beliefs are not. Nespor added that belief systems are also unbounded in that their relevance to reality defies logic, whereas knowledge systems are better defined and receptive to reason. And yet, for all their idiosyncrasies, he concluded that beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behaviour* (Nespor, 1987, as cited in Pajares, 1992, p. 311).

Nespor observed that knowledge is marked as being accumulative and it could be argued and changed "according to well-supported arguments", whereas beliefs are "affective feelings and personal experiences and are not open to outside evaluation or judgment" (Erkmen, 2010, p. 20). However, Woods' ethnographic study (1996) in Canada about teacher cognition in language teaching beliefs, contradicted Nespor's

study. Woods claimed that "the teachers' use of knowledge in their decision-making process could not be differentiated from their use of beliefs" (Erkmen, 2010). He realized through his interview data of eight English teachers teaching at university level, that it is difficult to distinguish between knowledge and beliefs because they overlap each other:

> *In many cases it cannot be clearly determined whether the interpretations of the events are based on what the teacher knows, what the teacher believes, or what the teacher believes he/she knows* (Woods, 1996, p. 149).

In an ethnographic study of pre-service teachers' professional perspectives. Goodman (1988) found that two students could have similar beliefs about teaching and learning but their behaviours which are associated with these beliefs may differ completely (Goodman, 1988 as cited in Pajares, 1992). Kagan and Smith (1988, P. 27) agree with this point: "teachers will interpret and respond differentially to students' performance, depending upon the values they hold … or their own belief system".

It is claimed that beliefs are considered to have more effect than knowledge, and this effect works independently of "the cognition associated with knowledge" (Pajares, 1992, p. 309). Anning, (1988) and Isenberg (1990), argue that teachers' thinking could be guided by their beliefs, values and principles or by their knowledge that informs their teaching practice. There were researchers such as Isenberg (1990), who found that the teaching practice of EC teachers in their classrooms strongly reflected their beliefs about children and learning. It follows then, that theories might be adapted in the field, due the beliefs of the teachers, in the context of all of the complexities of every-day classroom interactions. Thus, they will provide a foundation for teachers' decisions in the classroom. Therefore, the understanding of theories and belief systems of teachers will help to explain the diversity in teaching practice that are found among individual teachers (Isenberg, 1990).

3.3 The Image of Teacher/Profession

Kagan (1992, p.147) stated the central role played by a pre-service teacher's self-image: "indeed without a strong image of self as teacher, a novice may be doomed to flounder". However, Kagan argued that pre-service teacher' images of learners may be inaccurate. This is because they usually believe that their learners "possess learning styles, aptitudes, interests, and problems similar to their own" (Kagan, 1992,

p.145). Conversely, Erkmen (2010) considered student-teachers' images one of the sources of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. In this regard, Pajares (1992) argues that pre-service teachers keep images of teaching in their mind from their experiences as students. The images are shaped by pre-service teachers' interpretations of courses and classroom practices, which they attended. Therefore, those images can determine how student-teachers benefit from the knowledge which they received and how they determine their practices which they would later assume as teachers. Furthermore, disordered personal experience "taking the form of photographic images residing in long term memory, played a key role in the process of creating and recreating knowledge" (Pajares, 1992, p. 310). Student-teachers often expose such memories which may be from "past teachers, literature, or even the media" in their interviews and classroom discussions (Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Pajares, 1992, p. 311). Erkmen (2010) stated that student-teachers during their class observation:

> *Form images of their favourite and least favourite teachers and teaching methods, and with these images in their minds they develop beliefs about the best way of teaching and learning* (Erkmen, 2010, p. 23).

In a study of student teachers in primary education at a college of education in England, twelve student teachers were followed during the first year of a B.Ed. The researcher used a variety of methods to examine student teachers' understandings of teaching, learning and the curriculum during the programme of their teacher training, and "how these understandings related to their reactions to the course and to the interpretations they made of their own and others' practice" (Calderhead and Robson, 1991). The participants were interviewed in the first few days of the programme, and three times during the year. The aim of these interviews can be seen in the following extract from the study:

> *Interviews aimed to elicit students' ideas about the task of teaching, how they came to apply for teacher training, significant biographical details, how they saw themselves as teachers, their ideas about how children learn, their anxieties, their expectations, how they viewed themselves learning to teach, what they did in their school based work, and what significant events occurred during the year that influenced their thinking about teaching and learning* (Calderhead and Robson, 1991, p. 2).

The researchers concluded in this study that students keep particular images of teaching in their memories, which are mostly obtained "from their experiences in

schools as pupils". So, student teachers' interpretation "of the course and of classroom practice" will be highly influenced by these images. Therefore, it is seen as a challenge for teacher-educators to consider how these images could be "employed in the official processes of professional preparation" of student teachers. Also, they supported the idea in which student teachers spend time visualising their classroom performance, i.e. constructing a positive image of their behaviour in the classroom, based on their understanding of teaching theories, learning tasks within teaching context and personal experiences as students. Consequently, some of those student teachers have images which influence their teaching and learning (Calderhead and Robson, 1991, pp. 1-8).

Johnson (1994) examined in her study four pre-service English teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, and how their beliefs shape their teaching. This study showed that student-teachers use their images which are based on their prior experiences to describe their beliefs, and these images have an influence on these beliefs and on their teaching (Ibid, 1994). These images are identified by Erkmen (2010, p. 26): "images of their formal and informal learning experiences, images of themselves as teachers and images of the teacher preparation programme". Through Johnson's study, although student-teachers realized the type of teacher they are required to be in the future, they may not succeed because they might not make the educational context which they considered necessary. Therefore, it is suggested that student-teachers are provided with opportunities to observe good models of effective teaching practices, in which student-teachers can compare these models with their own teaching experiences (Johnson, 1994; Erkmen, 2010). In this sense, Erkmen stated the important role of good models:

> *The images held by these student teachers had an influence on their teaching, not necessarily because of their apprenticeship of observation, but because they lacked alternative images of teachers and teaching to act as a model of action* (Erkmen, 2010, p. 27).

3.4 Models/Paradigms for Initial Teacher Education

Apart from teaching models which are designed to be implemented in network-based environments, "where the students and the teachers have very limited possibilities to interact with each other in face-to-face situations" (Enkenberg, 2001, p. 505), relevant

models which are more applied in non-distance learning environments, will be presented.

Squires (1999) explored seven important paradigms of teaching, and explained the main features, strengths and limitations of each paradigm. However, there are links and overlaps between them, and there are elements of similarity between them. They are: "teaching as a common-sense activity, teaching as an art, teaching as a craft, teaching as an applied science, teaching as a system, teaching as reflective practice, and teaching as competence" (Squires, 1999, p. 3). These paradigms were discussed by many authors such as Turner-Bisset (2001), who acknowledges these paradigms as "… being good ways of conceptualising teaching" (Turner-Bisset, 2001, p. 2). Also, Turner-Bisset stated that "these paradigms do not always manifest themselves in pure or discrete form, whether at the level of teachers' professional work, or at the level of national trends and policies. However, they can be detected in various writings about teaching" (Ibid, 2001, p. 2). A new paradigm was suggested, acknowledging 'teaching as a knowledge-based profession', in which knowledge "encompasses concepts, facts, processes, skills, beliefs, attitudes and values" (Turner-Bisset, 2001, p. 159).

Martin (2005) has discussed how these paradigms are elements of the two models of professionalism, which were put forward by Fish (1995). These two models are shown in Table 3.3 to demonstrate "how the way in which teaching is conceptualised can affect what counts as professional knowledge" (Martin, 2005, p. 46). The first model is the technical-rational model, which has elements of the teaching as common-sense, craft, system and competence paradigms, while the second is the professional-artistry model (Ibid, 2005). However, the second one seems to be parallel to the paradigm which was suggested by Turner-Bisset (2001), and it has elements of the teaching as reflection and art paradigms (Martin, 2005). Each model has a view of a different perspective, therefore each one will lead to a model of ITE (Ibid, 2005) which may be affected the context and appropriate to person.

Table 3.3 Two models of professionalism

The technical-rational view	The professional-artistry view
Follows rules, laws, schedules; uses routines, prescriptions	Starts where rules fade; sees patterns, frameworks
Uses diagnosis/analysis to think about teaching	Uses interpretation and appreciation to think about teaching
Wants efficient systems	Wants creativity and room to be wrong
Sees knowledge as graspable, permanent	Sees knowledge as temporary, dynamic, problematic
Theory is applied to practice	Theory emerges from practice
Visible performance is central	There is more to it than surface features
Setting out and testing for basic competences is vital	There is more to teaching than the sum of the parts
Technical expertise is all	Professional judgement counts
Sees professional activities as masterable	Sees mystery at the heart of professional activities
Emphasise the known	Embraces uncertainty
Standards must be fixed; standards are measurable; standards must be controlled	That which is most easily fixed and measurable is also trivial- professionals should be trusted
Emphasises assessment, appraisal, inspection, accreditation	Emphasises investigation, reflection, deliberation
Change must be managed from outside	Professional can develop from inside
Quality is really about quantity of that which is easily measurable	Quality comes from deepening insight into one's values, priorities, actions
Technical accountability	Professional answerability
This is training	This is education
Takes the instrumental view of learning	Sees education as intrinsically worthwhile

*** Fish, 1995, p. 43, as cited in Matin, 2004, p.46**

Higgins and Leat (2001) reinforce the idea that models of teaching and teacher development "are not mutually exclusive. … they represent different perspectives, generated by different contexts and insights" (Higgins and Leat, 2001, p. 60). Saban, Kocbeker and Saban (2007) conducted a study in a Turkey context on Turkish student-teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning. Six main categories and metaphors emerged from the data, these are: (1) teacher as knowledge provider; (2) teacher as molder/craftsperson; (3) facilitator/scaffolder; (4) teacher as nurturer/cultivator; (5) teacher as counsellor; (6) teacher as cooperative/democratic leader (Erkmen, 2010). Erkmen sees that the first two categories put the full responsibility of teaching on teacher, and student is inactive (Ibid, 2010). According to Erkmen (2010, p. 37), this may be "due to the influence of traditional Turkish culture and education, where the teacher is seen as the sole authority and transmitter of knowledge, unlike Western education". In this respect, this finding is consistent with Mansour's research which argued that "teachers failed to develop constructivist-

oriented views about teaching and learning due to the fact that they had all experienced success in the existing 'traditional-oriented' educational environments" (Mansour, 2008b, p. 245). In the context of KSA, the students would have been used to this transmissive style of teaching through their primary and secondary education. However, the international literature argues that student-teachers need to be flexible, adaptable and questioning of theories, and thinking critically about their teaching practice. This is confirmed by similar studies in an international context, for example, Isenberg (1990); Zeichner (1986) and Atay (2006), who conducted studies in different contexts such as US, UK and Turkey. With regard to encouraging student-teachers to be flexible and adaptable and questioning of theories, these orientations could be widely applied in the KSA context. These orientations would be appropriate in the KSA teaching and learning context, because current policy aspires to improve the education quality and outcomes. Martin (2005, p. 48) claimed that "teacher-educators' own beliefs and the ways in which they impact on course design is implicit rather than explicitly acknowledged". She claimed from her personal experience that "it is a matter for individual reflection rather than for course team discussion" (Martin, 2005, p. 48). Therefore, it is necessary for teacher-educators to be aware of the range of models of ITE, in order to enable them to select the appropriate model for the context of teaching and learning (Higgins and Leat, 2001), and this leads to development of student-teachers' professional knowledge. On the other hand, Tillema and Imants (1995, p. 148) argued in their research about training for the professional development of teachers, that "there is a dynamic relation between the teacher's responsibility for his or her own learning and the training models that can be adopted".

In the field of ITE, it is argued that the technical-rational model is related to the competency approach, while the professional-artistry model is related to reflective practitioners' approach. However, both are important in ITE to enable student-teachers to work in the classroom effectively, in which they modify their practice and are critical in relation to their performance (Fish, 1995; Martin, 2005). Shafer (2004) gave an example of reflective practitioner:

> *After teaching a lesson many teachers will look back and perform an analysis of what took place and, based on this analysis, may alter the lesson the next time they teach it. This results in a new analysis of the modified lesson* (Shafer, 2004, p. 32).

Although Martin (2005) agrees that these models are useful, she warns that "they are also generalisations, can oversimplify data, and that each case must be seen in its context" (Martin, 2005, p. 49). Tillema and Imants (1995, p. 135) support the idea that teaching is a "craft" that attends to the practical aspects of teaching and views competence as "reflective practice". In a craft perspective, the competence can:

> *Only be established within the cultural milieu of teaching itself through a (re) construction of knowledge in real-life situations (Clandinin and Connelly, 1986), where teachers learn from their own experience (by cumulative reflection) or from one another* (Tillema and Imants, 1995, p. 135).

Freebody, Maton and Martin (2008) identified cumulative learning and the structural features of disciplinary knowledge that enable it to happen. They claimed that this knowledge "builds over time by integrating and subsuming previous knowledge, and segmented learning, where new ideas or skills are accumulated alongside past knowledge" (Ibid, 2008, p. 192). The structure of knowledge is in relation to "other educational and everyday knowledge", therefore learners need to build knowledge over time and also they are able to transfer this knowledge between different contexts, then cumulative learning will happen (Op. cit.). In the Saudi ITE context, and from personal experience, the college imposes the content of the modules in the ITE programmes. There is a question of whether it is more effective to develop student-teachers' professional knowledge, or whether this is a policy to control what lecturers provide to Saudi student-teachers during their preparation as teachers.

It is argued that reflective practice is an important part of professional preparation, in which student-teachers themselves are reflective about their own teaching abilities and children's learning outcomes (Elliott, 2005). The process of reflection means reviewing, reconstructing, re-enacting and analyzing in critical way on the student-teachers' own teaching (Ornstein, Thomas and Lasley, 2004). This needs student-teachers to look back on their teaching and learning experiences. So, they should learn to observe outcomes and offer reasons for effective practice and less successful activities, which in turn, helps them understand their own teaching behaviour better and helps them improve as teachers (Ibid, 2004). Moreover, the reflective practice in a group setting enables student-teachers to listen carefully to each other, and this gives them important experience for their future career (Ibid, 2004).

The apprenticeship model takes into account the development of student-teachers' competences; this is because this model assumes that the amount of time spend in the practice context should be sufficient for developing novices' competences (Martin, 2005). However, John (1996) illustrates the criticism of the apprenticeship model, in which student-teachers pay more attention to the personal features of teachers, such as good relationships with their students and enthusiasm, rather than considering the essential characteristics of 'professional' teachers, which may be invisible to the apprentices, like knowledge, understanding and skills. In this respect, some researchers, for example, Laursen (2007), argued that the competences could be not relevant to the theoretical knowledge. He stated that: "Many student teachers experience problems about the relationship between 'theory' and 'practice' in teacher education and find 'theories' irrelevant to the development of teacher competences". Contrary to this view, Brandes (1995, p. 213) asserted that: "theory informs practice and practice modifies theory". Furthermore, Blaise (2006, p. 96) asserted that: "theory guides and shapes everything that teachers do in the classroom". In addition, Pedro (2005, p. 59) indicated that student-teachers' reflections are "based on educational theory that they had learned in their university courses as they progressed through the teacher preparation program". In this sense, Abdelhafez (2010, p. 279) asserted that: "Reflection modifies practice and facilitates teacher growth".

Alzaydi (2010, p. 64) stated that: "practice needs theory which provides it with principles and guidelines", but he concedes that there is a challenging link between theory and practice and that educational theories are not easily applied into classroom practices. Importantly, this finding also concurs with the findings of Cheng (2005, p. 354), who found that the student-teachers were engaged in the complex process of mapping their theoretical knowledge from the programme onto the realities of a classroom practice. These theory-practice links are important for developing competence and promoting reflection, as well as building teacher identities. A study by Laursen (2007) on student teachers' conceptions of theory and practice in teacher education revealed that student teachers thought that members of the teaching staff at the university did not care about how educational theories are linked to classroom practices. They also mentioned that even if lecturers talked about ideas related to practice, their explanation was theoretical and not easily acted upon in the teaching practice context (Ibid, 2007).

On the other hand, it is worth to stating that theoretical knowledge is important in student-teachers' practice and their reflections. However, Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2003) maintain that personal experiences, context in terms of relationships and expectations, and values are also important factors in the reflective process. This is made clear by Alzaydi (2010, p. 65) who stated that "teachers do not use formal theories only, but also use personal theories which were shaped by their previous personal experiences about learning and teaching".

These prior views have provided a summary of conceptual models in ITE, and to what extent student-teachers consider theories learned in their programme relevant to classroom practice. There are many female Saudis who are learning at universities in the KSA to be teachers. However, the need for knowing the models for ITE in this context from student-teachers' perspective, and how these models reinforce their teaching and learning, is significant. In addition, the reviewed studies relevant to this research will help to understand how student-teachers' beliefs, previous personal experiences, context and values impact on their classroom practice in the context of KSA.

3.5 The Saudi Educational Research Studies

This section focuses on the specific ITE and ECE contexts in KSA. Evidence from research studies in ITE and in pre-school education programmes will be presented with the intention of contrasting the KSA and other international contexts. It is worth mentioning that, in Saudi universities, there are no specific ITE programmes for primary, intermediate or secondary teacher education, except specific programmes for kindergarten teacher education. Clearly, student-teachers who study in ITE programmes such as in Arabic, Islamic education, history or geography major, are qualified and eligible to teach in any of these stages (primary, intermediate or secondary). However, student-teachers who intend to teach at kindergarten have to be enrolled in specific programmes for kindergarten teacher education. Since this study focuses on the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers, the researcher gave more attention regarding national studies which are related to pre-school education stage.

It is asserted by Alaqail (2005) and Alzaydi (2010) that there is lack of research at universities in ITE in KSA. Alaqail (2005) gave the following reasons for this situation: (1) the teaching staff at university do not have sufficient time for conducting research; this is because they are busy with their teaching to large numbers of students; (2) lack of experience to conduct research; (3) lack of funding for conducting research; and (4) the bureaucracy system to attain scholarship for educational research.

Alzaydi's study (2010) explored the participant perspectives of the administrative and academic activity systems in a university-school partnership in ITE in KSA. Coordinators, university tutors, head teachers, cooperating teachers and student teachers were involved in the ITE partnership programme at a university. Significantly, he found that "participants' expectations were influenced by their history and background. In addition, student teachers were supported in [their] learning about teaching in the university, school and through the partnership between school and university" (Ibid, 2010, p. 2). Alzaydi (2010) concluded his study with the idea that in order for the teacher education programmes to be successful and effective, it is essential to understand how administrative and academic activity systems work and interact in a university.

Alzaydi (2010) stated that there are some administrative and academic issues facing the development of ITE in KSA. Centralization is one of the aspects of the administrative issues which affect the educational system in KSA in general and ITE programmes in particular (Ibid, 2010). This centralization is marked for the following reasons:

- Funding is run centrally;
- Any changes in the curriculum or the course structure must be endorsed first by the MOHE;
- Staff members and students are not engaged in the decision-making process (Alzaydi, 2010, p. 60)

Alzaydi claimed that centralization is common in the KSA context, and he stated that flexibility "is highly important for the partnership between school and university to be successful", which in turn has an impact on the ITE programmes (Ibid, 2010, p. 61).

This concurs with a study by Bokhari (1994) about problems facing academic departments at Umm Alqura and King Abdelaziz universities. Bokhari found that the common problem was centralization in decision making. In this respect, Alaqail (2005) claimed that due to centralization, individuals do not initiate changes and innovation or share in decision making. Alzaydi (2010) provided an example to clarify how administrative issues impact on academic system: in the KSA, universities are dependent on governmental funding. This reinforces centralization, which in turn limits the independence of universities. So, the lack of funding will create administrative problems at university, which consequently may lead to academic problems, such as:

- Ineffective teaching methods resulting from the lack of learning resources;
- The inability to attract distinguished staff members;
- The lack of educational research; and
- The lack of effective partnership between school and university in terms of teacher education (Alzaydi, 2010, p. 70)

Alsaid conducted study (2005) in which she assessed programme for educational preparation at a university in the KSA. The participants were university's teaching staff and female teachers who graduated from this programme. She found that the participants had similar view that the educational and psychological modules taught in this programme were intensive. However, the purposes of this programme were only partly achieved (Ibid, 2005). Regarding Alsaid's evaluation of this programme, Alzaydi (2010, p. 22) clearly stated that, "even within this well established institution, there are problems to be explored". He argued that this is because the aims of this TE programme were not achieved completely (Ibid, 2010).

Alaqail (2005) stated that Saudi universities cause the difficulties in their ITE programmes. He claimed that this development is mostly limited to adding or omitting of modules or topics in the programme. Alzaydi (2010) agrees with Alaqail (2005) that in ITE programmes in the KSA, there is a gap between theories taught at the university and the classroom practice at the school; consequently student-teachers are not able to apply what they learnt in an efficient way. However, Alzaydi (2010) stated that teaching approaches dependent on 'rote learning' may be one of the

reasons, even though they are part of the traditional methods in this culture. In addition, the expectations of university and school communities may be different. He explains:

> *University teachers expect students to be knowledgeable about theory. On the other hand, school teachers expect student teachers to be oriented towards classroom practice because what matters for them is what works* (Alzaydi, 2010, p. 68).

Another study was conducted at a university in the KSA by Jiffry and Alsolimani (2003) to investigate the reasons behind the decline in student-teachers' approaches towards reading. The study revealed that the curriculum was overloaded and student-teachers' personal lives interfere with their academic study. Also, they found that this decline led student-teachers to negative outcomes, in which their ability to express themselves, or to communicate with more knowledgeable people was poor. Moreover, they were not effective in problem-solving (Jiffry and Alsolimani, 2003). On the other hand, a study conducted at King Saud University by Al-Saadat (2003) investigated female students' views about the degree to which the teaching staff applied ideas of self- directed learning. Al-Saadat found that there is a lack of applying self-directed learning in university teaching, and the staff did not give much attention to this kind of learning. In addition, they did not permit students to reflect on their learning (Ibid, 2003).

However, it could be argued that students were not offered the opportunity of self-learning in schools. Studies revealed that "Saudi teachers at all levels in public schools do not use self-directed learning in their classroom, which has a negative impact on students' progress and study skills" (Alebaikan, 2010, p. 25). For example, Al-Saadat's study (2006) in which he argued that Saudi teachers who used to apply traditional methods for teaching and learning do not present adequate direction and feedback to their students. However, Alebaikan (2010) noted some constraints that may prevent applying self-learning in the general education system in KSA, such as "not realizing the importance of self-learning and not understanding its principles" (Alebaikan, 2010, p. 26). Also, it seems that she supports the findings of Nashwan and Al-Katheeri's study (1987) in which they stated the constraints that influence the lack of self-directed learning in public schools: inflexible curricular with strict time constraints; large number of students per-class; lack of facilities at schools; and lack

of training programmes for in-service teachers (Alebaikan, 2010; Nashwan and Al-Katheeri, 1987). So, Al-Saadat (2006) encourages practicing self-learning in the education system in KSA. Al-Nassar (2011) questions the predominance of traditional teaching and learning methods in Saudi schools and maintains that there is too much focusing on rote memorization of information, rather than its understanding. This is despite recommendations of policy makers in the MOE regarding emphasis on creating students' understanding of knowledge. She claimed that this type of teaching and learning could be influenced by the earlier '*kuttab*' schools which taught memorisation of the '*Qur'an*'. She stated that students are "expected to reproduce the same information given to them by their teachers in order to get the 'correct' answers either during class or in their assessments" (Al-Nassar, 2011, p. 14). Therefore, as Al-Nassar stated (2011), this type of teaching and learning prevents students from being creative or think critically because they repeat knowledge without making sense of what they are repeating.

Hence, the MOHE in KSA moved towards innovation in teaching and learning strategies. It has been offered many seminars and workshops about active learning and teaching strategies for teaching staff at universities. For example, King Saud University is one of Saudi universities which provided this kind of seminars and workshops for teaching staff, such as "professional development in e-learning and other teaching and researching skills" (Alebaikan, 2010, p. 28).

Otaibi and Swailm (2002) explored the importance of pre-school education for the future of Saudi children. Al-Ameel (2002), Muneef (1999) and Al-Noaim (1996) stated that the role of educational research in studying child learning and development has highlighted an urgent need for in-service training programmes for pre-school teachers and teacher preparation programmes. Thus, there is no evidence of research in the field of pre-school education programmes in KSA, specifically in understanding kindergarten teacher preparation programmes. So, I reviewed studies that have taken place in other countries. This is because there are similarities in educational trends across international contexts, such as expanding pre-school provision, developing national curricula and guidelines on pedagogy and practice, and developing frameworks or standards for teacher education. So, this would help the researcher to

locate developments in KSA alongside international developments and would highlight the originality of the current research in adding to this body of knowledge.

The previous studies have informed the conceptualisation of the present study, which focuses on the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers at the COE in the KSA. There is a rapid expansion in the establishment of colleges and departments to prepare kindergarten teachers in KSA. However, the need for highly qualified kindergarten teachers is of current concern in the drive to improve the quality of pre-school education. In addition, research on pre-service teacher education will create knowledge and understanding of how student-teachers' knowledge is structured, how their knowledge and beliefs develop during their teacher preparation, and how knowledge and beliefs inform their classroom practice. This study will provide culturally specific perspectives on teacher preparation in the context of KSA.

3.6 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

Various socio-cultural approaches have been developed for the understanding of learning in diverse contexts. These socio-cultural theories of learning are derived from Vygotsky's writing (who was born in Russia in 1896 and died in 1934) and these theories created great controversy and debate amongst researchers and theorists interested in learning (McInerney, Walker and Liem, 2011; Al-Nassar, 2011). According to Vygotsky (1978), learners gain knowledge and skills when they participate in learning processes with the presence of qualified guides to learn. This means that there is mutual interaction between the learners and teachers, and events which occur in the context. Through this theory, states Al-Nassar (2011, p. 33), "learners find meanings not just through individual experiences but also through social interactions". Vygotsky believes that "development involves learning much more than domain knowledge and includes becoming a contributing member of a community and society" (Hedges and Cullen, 2011, p. 7). So, according to Vygotsky's theory: "interaction and collaboration could lead to the development of learning" (Al-Nassar, 2011, p. 34). This means that communicating and engagement within cultural-social groups and institutions is a resource for learners' knowledge. To clarify, we design the context we interact with to fit the position in which we are learning and teaching. However, this context should help to create this position. Specifically, it could be argued that student-teachers interact and communicate to

learn within two professional communities (university and school) during their preparation to teach, as a formal context of education. However, there are other social and cultural communities in the society such as family and friends, which could be informal, and impact on student-teachers' learning and teaching. Consequently, the level of student-teachers' quality of development is dependent on what they gained and experienced from these communities. In other words, this development depends on significant role models and the forms of modelling they experienced that helped them to form their knowledge and beliefs.

Vygotsky wrote about "aesthetics, human and child development, language and thought, education and pedagogy, methodology and the crisis in psychology" (McInerney, Walker and Liem, 2011, p. 4). His writing was continued by those concerned to develop research and theory in fields involving the study of human understanding. In 1980s, his ideas began to have an influence on the understanding of learning as a social construct. This understanding has continued to develop through the years. This is because the researchers and theorists reinforced some areas of Vygotsky's work, or developed new ideas to meet the challenges in different contexts. The idea from his work, as socio-culturalists believe (McInerney, Walker and Liem, 2011), is that human thinking and actions are related to social processes in the environment, and there are social and cultural factors in this environment (such as classroom, school, family and community) indirectly impacting educational outcomes. According to Vygosky's theory, Khomais (2007) stated that when learning/teaching happen under different cultural circumstances, it is reasonable to predict different outcomes. She noted:

> *Vygosky's socio-cultural theory described how human minds develop in relation to their interaction with their culture in general, which appears to be applicable to all societies, in developed and developing countries. From this point of view, the process of development is the same, but the difference is in the context where the development happens* (Khomais, 2007, p. 63).

Khomais (2007) agrees with John-Steiner and Mahn's point of view (1996) that learners' experiences differ according to the different circumstances under practice. The perspective of the post-Vygotskian scholars is: "culture as a dynamic system of

meaning, with values, goals and practices that promote particular approaches to education" (Hedges and Cullen, 2011, p. 5).

Hence, the philosophy of socio-cultural perspective shows how social interactions and cultural and political forms impact on phenomenon involving people or they are impacted by it (Schoen, 2011). Also, Vygotskian theories see "that knowledge is formed in social interaction and broader cultural activity" (Hickey, 2011, p. 139). However, the socio-cultural research involves not only awareness of research processes and knowing of specific content but it also requires "the added dimension of thinking about the phenomenon in a way that sees the big picture of the embedded context in which it occurs" (Schoen, 2011, p. 18). Thus, the socio-cultural research attempts to see the whole of the context, and the social and cultural factors which impact human activity.

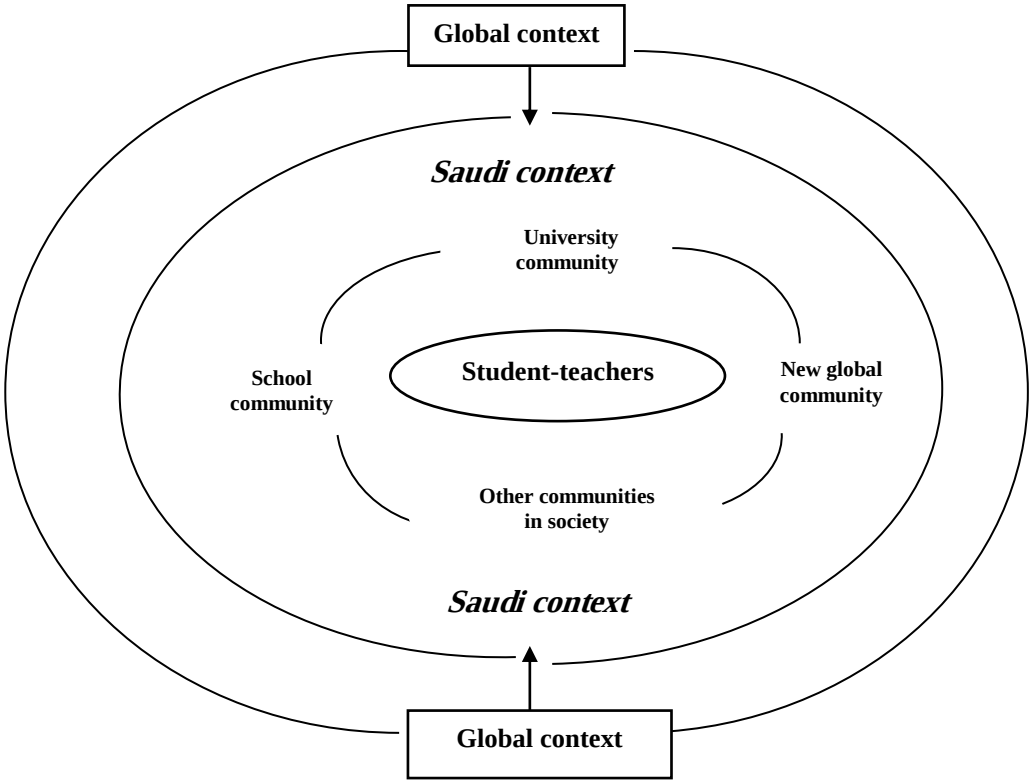
A number of researchers explored how the socio-cultural contexts impact motivation. For example, Winne suggested that motivating students requires multiple goals and competing where the students themselves create and change (Winne, 2004, as cited in McInerney, Walker and Liem, 2011). Vadeboncoeur, Vellos and Goessling (2011), designed conceptual framework which illustrates a socio-cultural perspective on identity construction. Their first educational implication was that learning as a particular kind of social, cultural and historical practice always:

> *Involves an interrelation of identity, knowledge, and values construction, even when the perspectives of educators, policymakers, and researchers do not address all three. Knowledge construction shapes-facilitates, fosters, hinders, challenges- the identities and values of students. As students' identities shift over time and across contexts, how they contribute, what they see as important, and how they themselves are valued changes* (Vadeboncoeur, Vellos and Goessling, 2011, p. 247).

A socio-cultural theory can be adopted in this study, because its perspective claims that the learning context is an important element in student-teachers learning (Goldhaber, 2000, as cited in Wang, 2007). In socio-cultural theory, the context includes the physical environment and the people who are involved, and the values and beliefs which are influenced by their cultures. Also, according to this theory there is the process of interacting and transforming between people and the context with each other, where the people change their response through these interactions and

transformations to establish different kinds of meaning (Stevenson, 2004). Moreover, the socio-cultural perspective is more than a selection of the social level of analysis 'over the individual level' (Schoen, 2011, p. 28). Hence, the research which adopts the socio-cultural perspective should include data from multiple levels in order to understand how the individual develops in an indicated context (Ibid, 2011). Figure 3. 2 represents the KSA context in which student-teachers learn and teach.

Figure 3.2 Student-teachers in a Saudi context and global context



As can be seen from the model, three main communities impact on student-teachers' learning and teaching. However, there is also the global community (as a result of modernization) which could potentially have a strong impact on student-teachers in the KSA context. This influence of globalization could be significant despite the efforts of decision/policy makers and religion scholars to prevent its infiltration into Saudi society. They try to keep the Saudi social and cultural values in Saudi society as an Islamic entity in the time of change.

It is argued that "people construct their identity through social interaction, and different sides of identity arise in different situation" (Kaasila and Lauriala, 2010). Burr (2003) asserts that knowledge comes out from social interaction, in which it is influenced by particular culture and history of individuals. Alebaikan (2010, p. 119) states that: "Religion and culture in Saudi Arabia not only shape people's attitudes, practices, and behaviours, but also form the construction of the reality of their lives". Thus, social-cultural theory is appropriate in this study because student-teachers are learning in a particular social, cultural and historical context within KSA. Student-teachers' knowledge is co-constructed with others in the university and school contexts. Therefore, this knowledge could be influenced by their own social, cultural and historical context development. Also, in KSA becoming a teacher is a socially acceptable career for women. So, they may build a teacher identity that is consistent with wider social-cultural expectations of their roles in society. Learning to teach involves transmitting and reproducing the society's dominant values and beliefs where the Saudi cultural context considers the Islamic religion as the foundation of Saudi culture and it influences all areas of life for Saudi citizens. Student-teachers learn educational theories about children's learning and development from other cultures in their programme. So, it noteworthy to question within the context of the study whether there might be some issues about the cultural reproduction of dominant ideas through university curricula.

Summary of the Chapter

The chapter has reviewed the literature on aspects of ITE, which were related to the present study. This review has provided substantial evidence of the importance of providing high-quality of teacher preparation programmes, and consequently improving outcomes for children's learning and development. The chapter offered substantial research evidence on what are considered to be fundamental knowledge bases for teaching. Through these views, it is clear that there is some overlap between these knowledge bases, and the PCK plays a crucial part in effective teaching, and it reinforces all other forms of knowledge bases for teaching. Since studies on ITE programmes in KSA are still scarce, this literature review helped to understand the ITE programmes in the field of pre-school education, in KSA context, based on Saudi student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs, which in turn helped the researcher to build

the theoretical model of the study. This model marks the important ideas of teaching and learning in ECE to be used for preparing IT in the field of ECE.

Providing examples of international studies have added depth to the context of this chapter, and that helped to interpret student-teachers' beliefs, and their learning and teaching experiences in a particular social and cultural context within KSA. As empirical research, the current study has the potential to identify whether the Saudi cultural identity impacts on student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs during their professional preparation. In addition, this chapter provided some insights into the data collection methods for the current study, and how they helped the researcher to gather worthwhile data. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology and data collection methods for the current study.

Chapter Four: The Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter aims to present the rationale for the methodological approach taken for this current study. The research objectives and questions are followed by the theoretical and philosophical assumption of this study. Then, description of the sample in terms of the participants and settings of the case study is demonstrated. The methods used for gathering and analysing data are discussed, making reference to issues such as ethical considerations of the data collection, validity and reliability where appropriate. Finally, research challenges and issues are highlighted.

Research Objectives

1- To understand a teacher-training programme for kindergarten teachers from the point of view of the student- teachers.

2- To investigate programme content, and how this programme is concordant with the pre-school curriculum in KSA.

3- To understand the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers.

4- To understand the extent to which the kindergarten teacher-training programme develops student-teachers' knowledge bases for teaching and learning.

Research Questions

1- What are the perspectives of student-teachers regarding the training of kindergarten teachers in the COE at a University?

2- How does the programme content prepare student-teachers to become kindergarten teachers according to the perspective of the student-teachers?

3- What are the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers? And how do their knowledge and beliefs develop over a four-year programme?

4.1 Theoretical and Philosophical Assumptions of the Study

Ontology

The term 'ontology' has been defined as "the study of being. It is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such" (Crotty, 2003, p. 10). Anderson and Buddle (1991) provide a simpler definition in which ontology searches for reality by answering the question "what is there that can be

known"? Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define ontology as assumptions about reality. In the literature of educational research, the view of reality is divided into two assumptions. The first is the scientific, which asserts that "realities exist outside the mind" (Crotty, 2003, p. 10). The second assumption is interpretivism, which assumes that reality is dependent on shared meaning created by people in society. The ontological stance of this study is interpretive, because the researcher looks for a meaningful explanation for a realistic situation. The researcher attempts to understand the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers at the COE in KSA from the point of view of the student-teachers. This is done by conducting interviews with them, as well as administering a questionnaires and doing documentary analyses of both the pre-school curriculum in KSA and the programme content. This means that multiple realities from the participants' world and the researcher's understanding are constructed (Anderson and Buddle, 1991) because the researcher wants "to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 22).

Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of what constitutes knowledge of the reality. It is concerned with understanding and explaining the question, 'how do we know what we know'? It seeks to answer the question of what the relationship is between the researcher and the forms and sources of knowledge within the research study, or in other words, how the researchers realize this knowledge (Crotty, 2003, p. 8). Pring (2004) asserts that epistemology in educational research is seen as a concept (theory) where the researcher can adopt different logical approaches to the examination and explanation of different aspects of reality. There are a variety of epistemological stances originating from such a distinction. First of all, there is *objectivist epistemology*, which means that "meaning, and therefore meaningful reality, exists as such apart from the operation of any consciousness" (Crotty, 2003, p. 8). Second, there is *constructionist epistemology*. This rejects the objectivist epistemological view because it claims that meaningful reality "comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world" (Op. cit.). Another important distinction is *subjectivism*, in which "meaning does not come out of" an interaction "between subject and object, but is imposed on the object by the subject" (Crotty, 2003, p. 9).

The chosen epistemological stance for this study is constructionism, because I believes that meaning does not exist independently of our thinking, but is generated and constructed through the partnership of "subject and object" (Crotty, 2003, p. 8). So, it would not be possible to construct credible meaning from the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers in this study unless there is an engagement between the researcher (the subject) and the student-teachers (the objects). Hence, the researcher does not stand outside the participants' world, but tries to be close to them during interviews, and to construct meanings through the interpretation of participants' work and conversations. In other words, the researcher considers him or herself part of the co-construction of reality (Wellington, 2000).

4.2 The Research Methodology

Methodology "is the research design that shapes our choice and use of particular methods and links them to the desired outcomes" (Crotty, 2003, p. 7). For Liu (2005, p. 8) methodology answers the question: "how can we produce reliable and valid knowledge". According to Punch (1998), the approach which is used in research depends on what the researcher is attempting to discover or examine. The methodology is interpretive with a case study design. Therefore, I chose this methodology because case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon. In addition, it searches for multiple realities which reflect different definitions of reality by different individuals involved in the research. Case study in research has many advantages. For instance, its data is robust in representation of reality in a particular context, the results are more easily understood by a wider audience, it focuses on wholeness rather than loose connections of traits and it provides the data that quantitative research cannot provide. However, there are some disadvantages to this approach. For example, it is time-consuming, labour intensive and difficult to generalize to a wider context (Verma and Mallick, 1999; Pring, 2004). According to Yin (2003, p.15), "Case studies can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence. In addition, case studies need not always include direct, detailed observations as a source of evidence". Moreover, Cohen et al. (2000, p. 247) make the following observation:

> *If a site specific case study is required, then qualitative, less structured, word-based and open-ended questionnaires may be more appropriate as they can capture the specificity of a particular situation. Where measurement is sought then a quantitative approach is required; where*

> *rich and personal data are sought, then a word-based qualitative approach might be more suitable* (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 247).

The research in this study had three stages, as demonstrated in Table 4.1. The first stage was designing of data collection methods including the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews questions, and identification of the participants (student-teachers). The second stage was conducting a pilot study of all data collection methods. The third stage involved collection of data by questionnaire, in-depth interviews with student-teachers who were involved in the detailed case study, and finally, analyzing, discussing and interpreting the data. Documentary analysis of both the pre-school curriculum in KSA and the programme content was made alongside these stages. However, the researcher will present the analysis of the programme content through interviewees' knowledge gained from taught modules in each study year in the programme as will be discussed in Chapters Six to Nine. Thus, methodological triangulation was achieved by using different methods in this study.

Table 4.1 Stages of the research in the study

N	The first stage	The second stage	The third stage
1	**Designing of data collection methods:** 1) questionnaire 2) semi-structured interviews	**Conducting a pilot study of all data collection methods:** - Questionnaire (N=60) - Interviews (N=10) **Data source**: Student-teachers at the COE	**Collection of data:** - Questionnaire (N=440), followed by: - Interviews with 32 student-teachers (each one, once a term over three terms)
2	Identification of the participants	Refinement of tools: reduced length of questionnaire, clarified wording of questions	Analyzing, discussing and interpreting the data
3	Documentary analysis of both the pre-school curriculum in KSA and the programme content at the COE		

4.3 Sampling (Participants and Settings of the Case Study)

The in-depth investigation of programme processes was carried out with a sample of student-teachers (Bennett, 1993). The main group of participants were student-teachers, all of whom were participants at one of the higher education universities in the KSA. These participants were studying the Kindergarten Major at the COE and

they will be kindergarten teachers in the future. All of them were females aged between 19 and 24 years old (in KSA, males are not permitted to enter Kindergarten Major) and their ethnic background is Saudi. The sample size for the detailed case study was 32 student-teachers. There was a focus on the nature of their knowledge and beliefs, how the student-teachers' knowledge bases for teaching and learning developed through their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers, and what their beliefs were about children's learning and development, pedagogical content and the kindergarten curriculum in KSA during their professional preparation programme.

It is worth mentioning that this four year kindergarten programme is divided into eight levels, each year containing two levels, where student-teachers were studying the educational and the general preparation modules (31 modules/50 academic hours), and specialized modules in EC (25 modules/78 academic hours). Each level contains three educational and general preparation modules, and five specialized modules in EC with the exception of the first level where all modules (8) are related educational and general preparation modules, and the eighth level is a related teaching practice stage outside the university at the kindergarten. In the analysis of the interviews, the researcher will focus on the knowledge gained by student-teachers from the specialized modules in EC. This will fulfil the study's aim of investigating student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs about children's learning and development, and the pedagogical strategies used in teaching children. A copy of the kindergarten programme modules appears in Appendix A (p. 308).

Within the group of 32 student-teachers, equal numbers (eight student-teachers) from each study year (first year, second year, third year and fourth year) were selected for a longitudinal study. So the sampling was stratified because the participants in this study were divided into four study years. These student-teachers were followed for a period of three terms as follows: the end of the first semester and the end of the second semester of the 2008/2009 academic year, and at the end of the first semester of 2009/2010 (see Appendix B, p. 312). The aim of this kind of study was to ascertain how the student-teachers' knowledge and teaching practice developed during this period (Bennett, 1993). Therefore, only those student-teachers who were willing to participate were included (Coates and Coates, 2006). Given the range of data required, it was important to have willing participants who were interested in sustaining their

participation in the study, in order to improve reliability. Based on their perceived willingness to participate in this study, the co-ordinator of the Kindergarten Major arranged a meeting with the student-teachers to meet the researcher (one meeting for each student-teacher). Following this meeting, I arranged an appointment at a mutually suitable time and place in order to conduct the first interview with each one of the participants.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

The research methodology applied in the present study is the interpretive approach with a case study design, which aims to construct meaning through personal perceptions (Anderson and Buddle, 1991). An understanding of participants' perceptions requires "extended interaction" and "sympathetic and empathic relationship between researcher and researched" (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 26). Therefore, the participants could participate in "data interpretation and refinement" (Ibid, 1997, p. 27). The design of this research required the use of several approaches to understand and describe research data. So, qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed for data collection. From Crotty's (2003) viewpoint, either qualitative or quantitative methods can be used to achieve the research objectives. According to Pring (2004) quantitative research is suitable for the physical world, whereas qualitative research is more appropriate to personal and social reality. Furthermore, Creswell (1994, p. 146) suggests that the researcher uses qualitative research "to explore a topic when the variables and theory base are unknown". Qualitative methods focus on understanding rather than generalizing, and participants or sites are selected which will provide important data on the topic of interest (Cohen et al., 2000). Since this study is interpretive-qualitative research, 'representativeness' (Lofland and Lofland, 1984; Miles and Huberman, 1994) rather than 'generalisability' is the first concern.

The data collection methods used were a questionnaire, interviews, and documentary analysis of both the pre-school curriculum in KSA and the programme content. Alzaydi (2010, p. 113) states that documents are "the third angle of triangulation and this in turn can increase the validity of the data". Furthermore, Bennett (1993, p. 17), asserted that "such multi-method approaches are necessary to adequately characterize both the processes and outcomes of complex teaching-learning settings" and therefore

they are the best way for the researcher to achieve a clear understanding of the research objectives. Importantly, multi-method approaches also help to establish reliability and validity. Kaasila and Lauriala (2010, p. 857) stated that "the use of different data gathering methods is an indication of triangulation; i.e. method triangulation, as well as triangulation of data sources, and which may be used to confirm the results".

4.4.1 Questionnaire

Four hundred and forty questionnaires were distributed to student-teachers in their first, second, third or fourth year of study, with one hundred and ten for student-teachers in each study year. Four hundred and forty questionnaires were returned, of which four hundred and nineteen had been completed and were therefore used. Questionnaire-based surveys are one of the most common tools used by researchers to establish participants' preferences. The questionnaire is an effective tool for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data for a survey (Alzaydi, 2010). So, an awareness of the techniques of questionnaire design is essential to any researcher wanting to establish opinions and beliefs on their specialist subject. Questionnaire design as a technique was discussed by Julien (2008, p. 848) in terms of: (1) The wording of questions such as language used should be meaningful to participants in that it is "simple, direct, jargon-free language"; making sure that language is appropriate for participants whose cooperation and interest is obtained; the questions are clear, specific and applicable to all participants; the questions that are translated from one language to another "should be double-checked for unintended errors"; avoiding "double-barreled questions" and "questions that include an implied alternative"; (2) Question sequencing, meaning that it "refers to the flow of items, which should follow the logic of respondents". In this respect, questions of group should be similar in the content. An introduction to the questionnaire should be provided which includes a title or subject of the survey, identifies the sponsor or organization conducting the survey, establishes legitimacy of purpose, requests cooperation and identifies any benefits for respondents, and indicates the degree of confidentiality; and (3) The general appearance should be attractive and easy to complete. It is necessary to take into account the layout of the questionnaire such as size, font, colour, and the quality of paper (if relevant). Moreover, clear instructions that guide participants and facilitate their answering of questions should be provided. The last part should present

opportunities for any comments and include a phrase of thanks. It is worth mentioning that this technique was also applied to interview schedules as a survey tool.

The biggest advantages of questionnaires are that they save the researcher time, they can be distributed and collected from a large number of samples, and the questions are written in exactly the same way for all respondents. However, with postal questionnaires the researcher cannot explain what the questions mean and is unable to help the respondent to understand what is required. Therefore, there is the possibility of 'spoiled' responses and an unknown amount of wrong information due to misunderstanding (Bulmer, 2002). In order to avoid such dilemmas, I personally met and submitted the questionnaires to participants. Thus, the questionnaire was administered first in order to explore what the key issues were based on the participants' responses, and then the aim was to investigate these issues further in the interviews with student-teachers who were involved in the detailed case study, making reference to the content of the programme and the pre-school curriculum in KSA. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire informed the design of the interviews and the case study of the student-teachers.

The population of student-teachers in this study was involved in eliciting knowledge bases and beliefs by using a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions and belief scales. The advantages of closed questions are that they are quick to answer and easy to code and analyze, and there is no difference between articulate and inarticulate respondents (Bulmer, 2002). Open-ended questions facilitate the probing of participants' responses further. Julien (2008, p. 847) observed that the responses of open-ended questions "require greater effort to record, code, analyze, and interpret than is the case for responses to closed questions". All the questionnaire items were prepared after intensive reading of relevant literature and studies, the pre-school curriculum in KSA and the programme content for trainee kindergarten teachers.

The student-teachers' questionnaire (see Appendix C, p. 313) consisted of five parts. Part one concerned the participants' general information which enabled comparisons between the different groups of student-teachers. This part contained such items as study year, interest, student-teacher's reasons for joining the kindergarten programme, and the content of the programme. Part two asked for the student-teachers' beliefs

about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers. This part contained two sections: the first for student-teachers' knowledge about children's learning and development; and the second for student-teachers' knowledge about pedagogical content and kindergarten curriculum in the KSA. This part consisted of 38 items. The third part consisted of 7 items which investigated the student-teachers' perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers. The fourth part asked the student-teachers about internal and external constraints affecting the programme. The statements in this part consisted of 6 items. Each item in part two, three and four should be answered by a tick (√) under *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree* or *strongly disagree*. A scale of frequency was designed, where each item was valued in the range from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated '*strongly disagree*' and 5 indicated '*strongly agree*'. The Likert scale was used, since it usually gives an accurate measurement of the participants' opinions. Finally, part five was an open-ended question which asked respondents to add any further comments about the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers at COE. However, the questionnaire on its own was insufficient to know in depth the nature of student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs through their professional preparation. So, it was necessary to follow what student-teachers said in the questionnaire through further in-depth investigation of student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs, conducted through individual interviews.

4.4.2 Interview

The interviews were undertaken with 32 Saudi student-teachers. Eight student-teachers were selected from each study year. First the researcher obtained permission to meet student-teachers in all four years by entering their lectures/classrooms. I asked for their voluntary cooperation in the detailed case study, resulting in 16 volunteers. This was followed by direct contact between me and the student-teachers, and our discussions resulted in finding a further 16 student-teachers who desired to participate in this study; as will be explained later in the pilot study section. This was an opportunity sample based on the student-teachers' willingness and interest to participate. They were representative of the cohort in each year of study (with regard to gender and age range). Student-teachers were interviewed three times – once a term over three terms/levels; each interview was conducted at the end of the term/level. For example, the researcher met those eight student-teachers (A_1, B_1, C_1, D_1, E_1, F_1, G_1,

$H_{1)}$ for the first time to conduct the interviews when they were at the end of level one, and a few weeks before their final examination in this level. They were interviewed for the second time at the end of level two, then again at the end of level three. This enabled investigation of how student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs developed over the programme as a whole.

Alzaydi (2010) and Alebaikan (2010) observed that culturally, Saudi people are not familiar with some research data collection methods such as interviews. This is, especially pertinent when researchers use audio recording during each interview with participants or use videotape inside school classrooms to record lessons. However, aaccording to Kvale (1996) the interview is the best method of investigating interviewees' opinions, feelings and perceptions. The researcher can "see things from the perspective of the participants" (Crotty, 2003, p. 7). Although interviewing is an appropriate method of interpretive research, the researcher must take into account the protection of participants' right to privacy through the use of confidentiality (BERA, 2004). The interview questions for this study, therefore, were prepared carefully after extensive reading of relevant literature and studies. Also, the data collected from the questionnaire responses were important in preparation of these questions.

In this study, the interviews were used as the main method of data collection. The purpose of the interviews was to engage in dialogue with student-teachers to elicit their perceptions of the professional preparation, knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten teachers at COE in KSA. Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participants and the interviews, each lasting for approximately one hour to one hour and 15 minutes. In this respect, Robson (2002) made the observation that a semi-structured interview:

> *Has predefined questions, but the order can be changed based upon the interviewer's perspectives of what seems most appropriate. Question wording can be modified and explanations given; specific questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones can be included* (Robson, 2002, as cited in Alzaydi, 2010, p. 112).

The interviews with student-teachers were conducted by face to face interaction in a colleague's office at the COE. A copy of interview questions was provided for each interviewee at least four days before the actual interview's appointment. This was to enable the interviewees to have a clear idea about the nature of these questions, and to

consider their responses. Also, at the beginning of the interviews, there was a brief discussion of about ten to fifteen minutes on all the necessary information for participants, including the purpose and objectives of the study, and the ethical issues that would be taken into account while conducting the research. For example, it was stressed that their participation would be kept completely confidential, their identity anonymous and their answers would be used only for qualitative and statistical analysis (BERA, 2004). In addition, it was explained and illustrated for the participants that the researcher would use audio recording during the interview process. Fortunately, all participants consented to the procedure; just one student-teacher was hesitant at the beginning but then gave her consent. Prior to the interview process I asked the participants if they had any questions. It was greatly appreciated and helpful that some of professors/supervisors (lecturers) provided written documents of their own work that addressed some of their evaluations of student-teachers' performance during teaching practice. All interviews were conducted in Arabic and then translated into English by the researcher for the purpose of analysis.

The interview questions for the student-teachers (see Appendix D, p. 323) consisted of five parts. Part 1 concerned general information about the student-teachers. This part included two questions: the first was about student-teachers' study year and their level of study; and the second question was about student-teachers' reasons for joining the kindergarten programme at the COE. Part 2 was about programme content (subject matter and pedagogical strategies), part 3 concerned teaching styles and their effectiveness, part 4 addressed the teaching/learning environment, and part 5 concerned the influences on the educational process. There were 16 interview questions concerning specifically the teaching practice, which asked the participants about their practice in year four/level 8 (see Appendix E, p. 326). These questions prompted student-teachers to reflect on the knowledge they had gained in the programme, and the ways in which they had been able to use that in their practice. In other words, the questions probed the ways in which they had been able to make connections between the taught programme (theory) and their practice, and how they thought they were progressing in their development as teachers.

Teaching practice consists of a school experience, where a student-teacher works in the classroom and the teaching is observed by a supervisor of student-teachers

(Bennett, 1993). According to Hargreaves (1995, p. 49), "observation gives information about what actually happens in the classroom". These observations assess student-teachers' teaching practices in the classroom, which are affected by their knowledge and beliefs (Drever, 2003; Bell, 1993). In this study, teaching practice took place in the last term (term 8) and happened over fourteen weeks in total. The student-teachers were in kindergartens for four days per week, where they were taking responsibility for the planning and implementation of the activities, environmental instructional preparation, and interactions with the children, all under the aegis of the educational framework and the scholastic administration (COE, 2004). This means that I had to meet eight student-teachers who were in year four to conduct the interviews two times. One of them was in level 7 and another in level eight (in teaching practice).

A positive relationship was established before the teaching practice between the researcher and each student-teacher, because it is considered an important element in a successful data collection stage (Bennett et al., 1997, p. 29). I met those student-teachers before the beginning of their teaching practice to discuss with them for approximately fifteen minutes the nature of their knowledge and beliefs required in this stage. A copy of interview questions was provided for each student-teacher in this meeting to have a clear idea about these questions. It was stated in the interview schedule for the participants that the researcher would ask them to describe verbally (or in writing) one or two episodes of their teaching that they think were successful, and one or two that were less successful. They were also asked to bring some samples of their written evaluations of lessons. Moreover, student-teachers knew that they had permission from the MOE/kindergarten to take photos of their activities which they believed to be successful, and those that were less so. The researcher used photographs as evidence to support the interview data, as an aide memoire for recall and illustration. They were used to capture real-life scenes that supplemented the real stories of their practice that were narrated by the participants. Therefore, the researcher chose discrete events to be used as visual data for the reader to support what student-teachers said about their teaching and how they put their theoretical knowledge into practice. The photographs also familiarise the reader with the contexts in which the student-teachers were working in KSA kindergartens. At the end of the teaching practice, there was an arrangement between the researcher and the student-

teacher for an interview appointment at the COE. The student-teachers were interviewed to ascertain their perceptions and reflections on their teaching and their expectations of teaching competences (Bennett, 1993).

4.4.3 Documentary Evidence

It is asserted by Yin (2003) that documentary evidence supports, reinforces and informs the findings obtained from other sources such as the questionnaires and interviews. It is claimed by Briggs and Coleman (2007) that research through documentary sources provides the opportunity for the researcher to create and construct his/her own methods of data collection and analysis. Therefore, various documents were obtained from the COE and MOE, such as:

- The manual of the COE at a University: it provided information about each module in terms of the aims, module content, suggested references, and the way in which student-teachers were assessed;
- The distribution of modules/time plan of Kindergarten Major; and
- Seven original books of the pre-school curriculum in KSA were provided by MOE, and this curriculum was analyzed in Chapter Two.

Hence, the methods used in this study were working together to answer the research questions. These methods (questionnaire, interviews and documentary evidence) were not isolated, but they were consistent with each other to provide both quantitative and qualitative data for understanding how student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs were structured and developed during their preparation as teachers, and how such knowledge and beliefs informed their teaching practice.

4.5 Ethical Considerations of the Data Collection

Research ethics is an important issue in educational research, because the researcher should ensure that as a result of her work no harm, detriment or loss of opportunity will be caused to participants. Malin (2003, p. 22) argued that "the rightness or wrongness of the research is judged according to its consequences …". In this regard, ethical issues have assumed a considerable role in educational research. Many research bodies, such as the British Educational Research Association (BERA) the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and universities, have

established clear guidelines in research ethics. They have set up codes of enquiry responsibilities, each of which should guide the ethical conduct of research.

Wallen and Fraenkel (2001) pointed out that there are three ethical areas which all researchers should consider: the protection of their participants, the confidentiality of research data and the avoidance of deception of research subjects. According to Burgess (1989), the ethical principles in educational research are informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, openness and no harm caused. Consequently, the researcher was aware of these ethical issues when she carried out the research. However, the researcher's own role in the university as a power dynamics should be taken into account. This is because I believe that my professional and personal experience at university, as both teacher and administrator, has helped me to obtain these consents and permissions from participants and institutes with fewer constrains. Consequently, I believe that my data collection was conducted with fewer constraints from the university or MOE, due to the positive relationship between me and the teaching staff and administrators, whether at university or MOE/kindergartens. This reflects Wellington's claim (2000, p. 41) that "the researcher affects the researched". Also, it supports Alebaikan's belief (2010, p. 127) that "the role of the qualitative researcher is an integral part of the whole research process". In this sense, in my dual role of teacher-researcher I felt that, ethically, I had an obligation to present participants' voices as they wanted to be heard, and I tried to be unbiased through the whole research processes, for example, during the analysis and interpreting of the data. Moreover, I tried to be open to being questioned and responded to the student-teachers' requests, as appropriate, during the interviews.

In addition to the measures outlined, a Certificate of Ethical Approval from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter was completed in order to carry out the current research. A copy of this ethical approval form appears in Appendix F (p. 330). Also, I requested formal permission to conduct this study at the COE in KSA. This involved the Dean of the researcher's college sending an official letter to the Dean of the COE in which the study takes place (both colleges were at the same university in KSA). Because the teaching practice periods took place in public and private kindergartens, another letter from the Dean of the college was sent to MOE, asking permission to allow student-teachers to take photos of their activities

with children (see Appendix G, p. 333). This body is officially responsible for all public and private kindergartens and consequently, approval for this was sent by the MOE in an official letter to the kindergartens.

The informed consent from the participants (student-teachers) was sought for their involvement. I ensured that these participants understood the nature of the research and the process in which they would be engaged prior to the start of the research, "including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported" (BERA, 2004). Following the BERA (2004) guidelines, I made it clear to the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time if they so wished. Hence, participants understood and consented to their participation. Furthermore, participants needed to be aware that the researcher had a duty to disclose to the appropriate authorities in case any illegal behaviour occurred during the research (Ibid, 2004).

Confidentiality and anonymity were taken into consideration in this study. The researcher did not identify the participants or the college/university, or the kindergartens which were involved. In order to preserve anonymity, the student-teachers were represented in this study by letters; A_1, B_1, C_1, D_1, E_1, F_1, G_1, H_1 for year 1, and A_2, B_2, C_2, D_2, E_2, F_2, G_2, H_2 for year 2, and so on.

The guidance from BERA (2004) stated that a crucial ethical issue can arise if the researcher does not have the participants' permission to disclose their statements, unless participants have consented to be identified. From this point of view, because there are recordings of extracts from participants' comments and anonymous conversations, I ensured that permission for these extracts to be published was obtained from each one of the participating student-teachers.

4.6 Pilot Study

The pilot study is an introductory stage for the main study. It is defined for researchers by Robson (2002, p. 185) as "a small-scale version of the real thing, a try-out of what you propose so its feasibility can be checked". Yin (2003, p. 80) pointed out that "methodologically, the work at the pilot sites can provide information about relevant field questions and about the logistics of the field inquiry". The pilot study

allows the researcher to modify, add or revise the questionnaire and interview questions. The wording of these questions is revised to ensure that the participants grasp the meaning. Moreover, the pilot study also gives the researchers the opportunity to test their ability in interviewing skills and techniques, and managing the time during interview (Mansour, 2008a; Gahwaji, 2006).

In October 2007, I met the co-ordinator of the Kindergarten Major to give me permission to contact the student-teachers at Kindergarten Major in all four years in their classrooms. My aim was to meet personally those student-teachers, ask for their cooperation in this case study and to explain that their participation in this research project was voluntary. The arrangement with the co-ordinator and the researcher was that we would choose a module from each study year. Due to the size of the whole cohort, student-teachers were divided into smaller groups for each module in each study year. The student-teachers were met while entering their lectures and a brief conversation of between 10-15 minutes was conducted with them after they had finished their classes (during break time). This happened after permission had been obtained from their lecturers. The focus of this meeting was to explain the purpose of the study and the ethical issues that would be taken into account while conducting the research. Then I wrote my e-mail on the board and gave student-teachers time (between one week and a month) to consider if they would like to participate in the case study. Although the number of student-teachers at that time was about 600, consent replies were received from just 16 student-teachers who desired to participate in the study.

In July 2008, after completion of the design of the data collection methods (the questionnaire and interview questions), all research instruments were pre-piloted with the first supervisor of the research and three of my colleagues specializing in ECE. They were asked to check the layout, order of the questions, wording of the items and questions. Based on the detailed feedback received, comments and some ideas about these methods were taken into account and items modified accordingly. The data collection methods were translated from English to Arabic by the researcher. Then, they were given to my colleagues who are bilingual (two of them have PhDs and three are PhD students) to check my translation. Then I sent all of the Arabic versions to an

Arabic Language teacher to check the accuracy of Arabic Language before piloting the study.

Eight experts (those were professors in Kindergarten Major) who were specializing in the fields of child psychology, childhood studies, kindergarten, and curricula and methods of teaching kindergarten, were given three models of the data collection methods to check before the pilot study including: the student-teacher questionnaire, interview questions for student-teachers, and interview questions for student-teachers in teaching practice. Feedback on the wording, arrangement, and relevance was gathered from three of those experts. In addition, fourteen student-teachers were given copies of the questionnaire (those were from 16 student-teachers who desired to participate in the study). The purpose was to obtain feedback on the length of the student-teacher questionnaire, whether there were any items or questions which were redundant, irrelevant or not clear in wording, but after more than three weeks comments were received from just five student-teachers. Therefore, I omitted and re-worded some items or questions in the questionnaire and interview schedule, after which they were modified and adjusted to become the revised questionnaire and interview questions. In October 2008, a pilot study of all data collection methods was carried out in the COE in KSA, in order to trial intensively the design of the questionnaire and the interview techniques.

The student-teacher questionnaire: the sample size in the pilot study was sixty student-teachers. These were chosen from each study year. Thus, the stratified method of sampling was used, with the participants divided into four study levels. An attempt was made to choose equal numbers from each study year. The student-teachers were met either while entering their lectures before they were starting their classes, or when they had finished their classes. I talked to them for 3-5 minutes, explaining the purpose of the study and how answering of this questionnaire would be crucial to the success of this study, and that the outcomes of the study would have positive benefits for their learning and teaching. All this happened after permission had been obtained from those in the authority in the COE. Then, I negotiated the specific arrangement with the co-ordinator of the Kindergarten Major and the lecturers to gain permission to enter their classes.

The student-teacher interview questions: these were piloted with two student-teachers from each study year, and two student-teachers in teaching practice. "The pilot allows the researcher to sharpen her interview techniques and skills, and at the same time, estimate how long each interview session in the actual study will take to complete" (Gahwaji, 2006, p. 123). The researcher conducted the interviews in an informal style, and then there was a discussion after each question to help the researcher to identify repetitive and irrelevant questions. The interviewees agreed about the appropriateness of the interview questions and they suggested some minor changes. Then the interview questions were slightly modified for use in the main study.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

In order to check the validity of the data relating to the student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs about professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers, content validity was investigated. Wallen and Fraenkel (2001, p. 86) defined validity as "the extent to which an instrument gives us the information we want" and they stated:

> *Content-related evidence refers to the nature of the content included within the instrument, and the specifications the researcher used to formulate the content. How appropriate is the content? How comprehensive? Does it logically get at the intended variable? Such evidence most often relies on the judgments of people who are presumed to be knowledgeable about the variable being observed* (Wallen and Fraenkel, 2001, p. 89).

Experts in the fields of child psychology, childhood studies, kindergarten, and curricula and methods of teaching kindergarten assessed the student-teacher questionnaire and the questions of the interviews for content validity, and some amendments were made in order to ensure that the instruments measured what they were intended to measure.

It is argued that the quality "of any quantitative research is judged against its validity and reliability. However, in qualitative research, it is suggested establishing alternative criteria for assessing its quality" (Ahmed, 2011, p. 117). For a qualitative study to be trustworthy, many qualitative researchers describe concepts which are parallel and correlated to reliability, such as credibility and dependability (Ibid, 2011; Miller, 2008). Given (2008, p. 138) defined credibility as: "the methodological

procedures and sources used to establish a high level of harmony between the participants' expressions and the researcher's interpretations of them". Furthermore, Schwandt (2001, p. 258) defined dependability as: "the process of the enquiry and the inquirer's responsibility for ensuring that the process of the enquiry is logical, traceable and documented". Miller (2008, p. 754) pointed out three strategies of credibility and dependability which "demonstrate systematic attention to reliability-related issues", they are:

- Methodological coherence (the appropriate and thorough collection, analysis, and interpretation of data);
- Researcher responsiveness (the early and ongoing verification of findings and analyses with study participants); and
- Audit trails (a transparent description of all procedures and issues relative to the research project (Miller, 2008, p. 754).

Hence, to ensure the quality of the qualitative research, triangulation of methods of data collection (a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with 32 student-teachers who were involved in the detailed case study and documentary evidence) was employed to obtain an understanding of the participants' perspectives about the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers. This use of triangulation was to enhance the validity of the findings of study (Robson, 2002). With regard to triangulation, Ahmed (2011, p. 118) made the claim that it is used: "to check the integrity of, or extend inferences drawn from the data". And he agreed that the methodological triangulation enables the researcher to balance between weakness in one method (if found) with the strength in another method (Ibid, 2011).

Moreover, detailed information of the process of data collection and analysis was provided at all stages of research. To make sure about the 'audit trail', I asked my thesis supervisors to verify that the process of research and interpretations of the data matched both the literature review and methodological level. In the current study, I endeavored to ensure that the constructed realities of my interpretation of the data and findings were consistent with the realities and views gained from the participants.

To achieve accuracy in the reporting and interpretation of the data, I recorded and transcribed all the interviews by myself. Each interview was sent by email as a written transcript (Arabic copy) to the participating student-teacher to check and clarify any area of misunderstanding, whether by me or the participant. Also, there were conversations on the phone (if needed) to ensure the understanding of things from the participants' perspectives. In addition, the interviews were translated from Arabic to English by me; I used one translator to check my translation of the participants' Arabic transcripts of the interviews. All these resulted in increased reliability and robustness of research findings.

4.8 Data Analysis

As mentioned above, this study adopted different methods of data collection. This required that the researcher used a variety of approaches in data analysis.

The quantitative data analysis:

Descriptive statistical tests were applied, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software, to summarise the results of the analysis of the closed questions in the questionnaire. The frequencies of data and percentages, and mean ranks analysis were used to compare the differences between the student-teachers' perspectives from each study year.

The qualitative data analysis:

Data from the interviews with student-teachers were analysed throughout the study. All interviews were recorded by using audio recording, and they were transcribed after the interview. These transcripts were provided to each of the student teachers "before the start of the next interview for their scrutiny, confirmation or criticism" (Mansour, 2008a, p. 1609) and each interview was followed by a primary analysis to reveal new questions for the next interview, or to generate data which could "help the researcher to find out repetitive and irrelevant questions" (Gahwaji, 2006, p. 123; Mansour, 2008a; Bennett et al., 1997).

Since all interviews were taped and transcribed, data were coded and recoded from reading the transcripts several times using the continuous comparative process. Then, the broad categories (themes) emerged and these created sub-categories. Some

categories were clearly stated. However, others were implicitly embedded in the responses. Each statement was allocated to specific category, but if there was a piece of data which fitted into more than one category, it was coded into all the possible categories. This method prepared the data to be analysed and made it ready to be interpreted (Ezzy, 2002). Similarly, the data gained from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were also analysed qualitatively.

Qualitative research is considered interpretative research, and the researcher will display the summarised data by using Tables, Figures, and Concept maps after analysis and interpolation of the data from each study year. Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor (2003, p. 204) asserted that:

> *Some researchers organise and display summarised and sorted data in diagrammatic form, in matrices or figures, in order to spot connections and interrelationships which are difficult to see in an ordinary text based format*

4.9 Research Challenges and Issues

Firstly, there were no previous studies in KSA related to this study and there has been no research conducted on student-teachers who are specialising in pre-school education (Kindergarten Major) at the COE in KSA. Thus, the study addresses this gap in scholarship, by aiming to understand the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers about their professional preparation programme.

Secondly, because of the longitudinal nature of the case study, the researcher had some concern about the participants. They might withdraw before the end of the data collection period. However, this challenge was overcome; for example, I took two student-teachers from each study year to back up the 32 student-teachers who were involved in the detailed case study. This means that 10 student-teachers in total were chosen from each study year. The eight student-teachers in each study year were interviewed first, but if any of them withdrew then one of the two reserve student-teachers would become the replacement (see Appendix B, p. 312).

Thirdly, there were some significant cultural issues that influenced the methods and data collection processes. Using videotape was considered an appropriate method and a vital part in studies of teachers' beliefs and practices. However, the researcher was

not permitted to use videotape (which could assist later transcriptions) as a tool to record lessons. The Saudi cultural context does not allow the use of this kind of tool inside school classrooms. However, as an acceptable alternative, permission was obtained by the researcher from the MOE and those responsible in kindergartens, namely, the director of the kindergarten and class teachers, to allow student-teachers to take photos of their activities with children.

Fourthly, in KSA, culturally, teachers are appreciated by their students. So, when students talk to or make contact with their teachers, they try to take a positive stance. I wondered whether the responses of the interviewees could be mainly positive due to the culturally accepted respect for seniors or people in positions of authority, or they may seem not to problematise their knowledge and/or development. However, I aimed to build a good and warm relationship between me and the participants to help them feel more relaxed in my presence and to talk about their experiences sincerely.

While the main study was conducted in the Eastern Region (Al-Ahsa city) in KSA, this study is presented in English at The University of Exeter, UK. Therefore, the researcher had some concerns about the time and effort which was required in the construction and translation of data collection methods (Gahwaji, 2006), especially as both of the researcher's supervisors were not bilingual (English and Arabic). In addition, there was a concern about the amount of time which was taken to obtain approval from the responsible authorities and participants prior to the data collection stage.

Finally, the interviews were conducted in Arabic, and the data was translated into English by the researcher. The limitation of translation from Arabic to English might influence the meaning or the subtleties of interpretation. However, I tried to be as accurate as possible. In addition, help with translation and cross-checking was sought from several colleagues who were also PhD candidates and were bilingual in English and Arabic.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has explained the methodology used in the current study, with detailed explanation of sampling and stages of the research given. Mixed-method design was employed, in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The chapter has discussed each of the research methods of data collection and the process of analysis in turn, along with issues of validity and reliability. This chapter also offered an explanation of the pilot study as an introductory stage for the main study. The following chapter will present the findings and analysis of the student-teacher questionnaire.

Chapter Five: Analysis of the Questionnaire

Introduction

Four hundred and forty student-teachers answered the questionnaire about the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers. It contained five parts as was illustrated in Chapter Four (pp. 97-98). In complying with the co-ordinator's request, the lecturers who teach student-teachers in Kindergarten Major allowed me to submit those questionnaires to their student-teachers in each study year and I followed up the process of returning them. Four hundred and forty questionnaires were distributed to student-teachers in all the years (first year, second year, third year and fourth year), with one hundred and ten for student-teachers in each study year. All questionnaires were returned, and the four hundred and nineteen questionnaires that were completed were used. There were 107, 103, 101, 108 respondents from the first, second, third and fourth years respectively. A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix C (p. 313). The results of the student-teacher questionnaire for each study year are presented in this chapter. This is followed by a summary of the findings across the four years, in which the researcher made a direct comparison of the mean ranks of questionnaires to highlight the important column among student-teachers in the first, second, third and fourth study years.

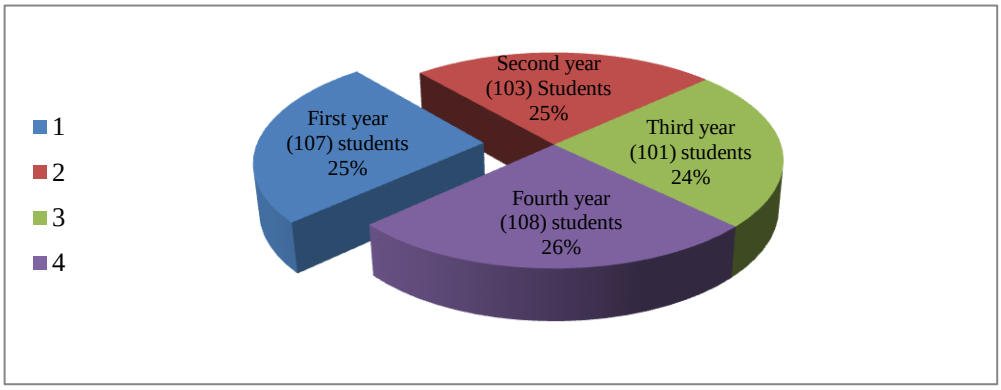
5.1 Analysis of Questionnaire from First Year Student-teachers

Part one: General information

1. Year of study

Figure 5.1 shows that there were (107) student-teachers from the first study year in the sample.

Figure 5.1 First year



2. Interest in working with pre-school children

When student-teachers in the first study year were asked whether they were interested in working with pre-school children or not, 91.6% (N=98) answered "interested". However, it was noticeable that a low number (N=9) 8.4% of student-teachers answered "not interested", as presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Interest in working with pre-school children

First year	N	%
Not interested	9	8.4
Interested	98	91.6
Total	107	100.0

3. Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme at the College of Education

Student-teachers were asked an open-ended question regarding their thinking about their reasons for joining the kindergarten programme. Mostly, each student-teacher could give more than one reason. Only three of the 107 student-teachers in the first study year did not answer this question. There were no differences in responses between student-teachers who were interested in working with pre-school children or not. One hundred and four student-teachers' responses regarding their reasons for joining the kindergarten programme were grouped into the following categories in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme

Reasons			N
Internal	**Personal**	for love of children	51
		enhancing knowledge and experience of children	13
		suitable for my personal needs as mother	5
		keeps me in touch with the realities of life	4
		benefit me in education of my children in the future	32
		prepare a strong generation	16
		Total	**121**
	Capacity	suitable for my capacity in interaction with children	5
		getting a high degree in secondary school	4
		Total	**9**
	Informatics	student-teachers like to know about the following:	
		the world of childhood	12
		child psychology	2
		what a child loves	3
		how to interact with children	19
		how to handle childhood problems	5
		the appropriate activities for the child's abilities	1
		child needs	2
		child characteristics	1
		child preparation for transition to primary school life	1
		children's health problems and how to overcome them	1
		food suitable for children	1
		help children to encounter future life in correct way	1
		Total	**74**
External	**Society**	affecting others	1
		there are wrong beliefs about children in society	1
		behaviour of people around me towards children is wrong	1
		society encourages to join the kindergarten programme	1
		Total	**4**
	University	it is a new major in university	9
		the absence of other desirable majors at university	7
		university policy followed in the admission of students	1
		it is an interesting major	19
		it is an easy major	3
		Total	**39**
	Job	opportunity to get a job	15

4. Module content on the Kindergarten Major

In response to the questions about the content of the modules, 59 student-teachers said that some of modules were useful and some need to be reconsidered. Forty eight respondents thought that the modules were useful and, significantly, none of the student-teachers thought that modules were not useful. The student-teachers' responses for the content of modules are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Module content

The content of modules	N	%
Useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children	48	44.9
Not useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children		
Some of them are useful and some need to be reconsidered	59	55.1
Total	107	100.0

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

5. The extent to which student-teachers perceive the content of the modules as useful, and reasons for this

The responses to this question were related to student-teachers' responses in previous questions. Although all student-teachers (N= 107) responded to the previous question, some participants (N= 10) did not respond to the current question.

On the one hand, Table 5.4 overleaf shows student-teachers' reasons for thinking that the modules were useful as a preparation for working with children. Of 48 student-teachers, five did not provide their reasons. The student-teachers' reasons were divided into two categories. 20 student-teachers were within the first category, which was under the title "*Modules are comprehensive for all child's learning and development areas".* 23 student-teachers fit the second category which was titled "*Modules develop student-teacher's knowledge and experience for child's learning and development"*. Representative student-teacher comments can be seen in the following extracts:

> *They provide knowledge and experiences which are related to child's world such as understanding of child psychology, childhood problems, children's needs and characteristics, and how to prepare educational context to enable children to learn, then how to present information and activities for developing children's abilities.*

Some of modules learn how to interact with ordinary and non-ordinary children. And some of them illustrate the importance of play in child's learning, and how is play with children, and how to produce educational aids and games for children from local materials. Also, some of them develop student-teacher's knowledge for children's health and their nutritional needs.

Table 5.4 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that the modules are useful

Reasons	N
Modules are comprehensive for all child's learning and development areas	20
Modules develop student's knowledge and experience for child's learning and development	23
No response	5
Total	48

On the other hand, out of 59 student-teachers who said in the previous question that some modules were useful and some needed to be reconsidered, five did not mention their reasons behind that. It is worth mentioning that some student-teachers put more than one reason behind their thinking that some modules needed to be reconsidered as shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that some modules are useful and some need to be reconsidered

Reasons		N
Some modules are useful	Keeps student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	16 of 54
Some modules need to be reconsidered	Do not keep student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	40 of 54
	Repeated knowledge	12 of 54
	There is no link between practical and theoretical part for some modules	1 of 54
	A lot of activities in some of the modules	2 of 54
	Many modules are taught	1 of 54
	Teaching style not effective	2 of 54

Sixteen of the fifty four student-teachers said that the modules kept student-teachers in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice, they ensured that modules provided knowledge related to children's learning and development, and how student-teachers interact with children as a mother and as a teacher. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *There are many things in modules which are useful in student-teacher's daily life as a mother and as a teacher, they help student-teacher to understand children's behaviours and how to interact with children, and the best approaches to teaching and learning for children. We need this knowledge in teaching practice to become successful teachers.*

In contrast, 40 student-teachers said that modules did not keep them in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice. One student-teacher illustrated this in the following extract:

> *We find a lot of information is redundant and not useful for us, we do not need to know them because they unrelated to daily life or childhood. For example, study the history of kindergartens. Also, there are modules related to special education major, they not related to Kindergarten Major. We do not teach children with disabilities. If this happen they could be children with simple disabilities, why do we study all types of disabilities as student-teachers who joined the special education major?*

Of 54 student-teachers, 12 said that there was repetition of content in some of the modules. One student-teacher's comment was "*we find most of the knowledge is repeated, we study them in two modules or more of specialization*".

Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

A number of knowledge indicators of the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers were presented to the student-teachers. This part of the student-teacher questionnaire included two sections as follows:

1. Knowledge of children's learning and development

The first section included 14 items which asked student-teachers to indicate their opinions of whether student-teachers in their kindergarten programme should have knowledge about children's learning and development Table 5.6 presents the student-teachers' responses.

Table 5.6 Knowledge of children's learning and development

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	child development theories	**25**	**23.4**	**61**	**57.0**	**12**	**11.2**	**8**	**7.5**	**1**	**.9**
7	pre-school child characteristics	**64**	**59.8**	**41**	**38.3**	**2**	**1.9**				
8	children's needs and how teachers meet those needs	**86**	**80.4**	**19**	**17.8**	**2**	**1.9**				
9	supporting child's moral, mental, physical growth in a natural environment similar to child's family environment	**73**	**68.2**	**32**	**29.9**	**1**	**.9**	**1**	**.9**		
10	supporting children's Islamic religious beliefs in the oneness of God	**86**	**80.4**	**19**	**17.8**	**1**	**.9**			**1**	**.9**
11	play and the importance of play in kindergarten child's learning	**80**	**74.8**	**26**	**24.3**	**1**	**.9**				
12	pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children	**36**	**33.6**	**52**	**48.6**	**15**	**14.0**	**3**	**2.8**	**1**	**.9**
13	the methods of child raising	**63**	**58.9**	**38**	**35.5**	**6**	**5.6**				
14	childhood problems and how to handle educational and behavioural problems	**72**	**67.3**	**31**	**29.0**	**4**	**3.7**				
15	child protection against dangers	**68**	**63.6**	**35**	**32.7**	**3**	**2.8**	**1**	**.9**		
16	how to interact with children and adults at kindergarten, and parents	**60**	**56.1**	**43**	**40.2**	**4**	**3.7**				
17	roles and functions of a kindergarten teacher in field experience (teaching context)	**51**	**47.7**	**42**	**39.3**	**13**	**12.1**	**1**	**.9**		
18	child preparation for transition to primary school life	**57**	**53.3**	**42**	**39.3**	**5**	**4.7**	**3**	**2.8**		
19	aims and content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia	**30**	**28.0**	**48**	**44.9**	**18**	**16.8**	**8**	**7.5**	**3**	**2.8**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

2. Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

The second section included 24 items which asked 107 student-teachers to indicate their opinions on the adequate training for the following areas, as shown in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
20	provide children with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their age	68	63.6	37	34.6	1	.9	1	.9		
21	create appropriate activities whether inside or outside the classroom for children's abilities	53	49.5	46	43.0	6	5.6	2	1.9		
22	plan group and individual activities for kindergarten children	58	54.2	41	38.3	7	6.5	1	.9		
23	plan child-initiated activities, including play	61	57.0	36	33.6	7	6.5	3	2.8		
24	plan adult-directed activities	29	27.1	57	53.3	16	15.0	5	4.7		
25	design activities fostering intellectual development of kindergarten children	55	51.4	49	45.8	3	2.8				
26	design activities fostering motor/ physical skills of kindergarten children	57	53.3	45	42.1	4	3.7	1	.9		
27	design activities fostering emotional development of kindergarten children	53	49.5	46	43.0	5	4.7	3	2.8		
28	design activities associated with child's learning of the scientific and mathematical concepts	34	31.8	53	49.5	16	15.0	3	2.8	1	.9
29	design activities associated with development of the linguistic skills of kindergarten children	49	45.8	47	43.9	8	7.5	2	1.9	1	.9
30	design activities that contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of kindergarten children	58	54.2	45	42.2	3	2.8	1	.9		
31	design activities to foster the KSA cultural customs and beliefs of kindergarten children	61	57.0	35	32.7	8	7.5	3	2.8		
32	design activities to prepare the child for reading and writing	53	49.5	38	35.5	13	12.1	1	.9	2	1.9
33	design and produce educational aids appropriate for kindergarten children	48	44.9	49	45.8	8	7.5	1	.9	1	.9
34	design and produce educational games appropriate for kindergarten children	51	47.7	42	39.3	11	10.3	2	1.9	1	.9
35	use local materials properly to design educational activities	52	48.6	47	43.9	6	5.6	2	1.9		
36	acquire educational qualifications that distinguish them from other stage teachers	60	56.1	37	34.6	9	8.4			1	.9
37	design educational context to enable children to learn	45	42.1	54	50.5	6	5.6	1	.9	1	.9
38	teach the subject areas of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA	41	38.3	41	38.3	21	19.6	2	1.9	2	1.9

39	assess children's learning and development across the KSA national curriculum	**44**	**41.1**	**36**	**33.6**	**20**	**18.7**	**6**	**5.6**	**1**	**.9**
40	manage classrooms effectively	**64**	**59.8**	**32**	**29.9**	**9**	**8.4**	**2**	**1.9**		
41	encourage children's imaginative thinking	**76**	**71.0**	**28**	**26.2**	**3**	**2.8**				
42	design educational unit for kindergarten children	**48**	**44.9**	**50**	**46.7**	**8**	**7.5**			**1**	**.9**
43	design and manage the kindergarten programme	**36**	**33.6**	**56**	**52.3**	**9**	**8.4**	**4**	**3.7**	**2**	**1.9**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

Part three: Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

The third part of the student-teacher questionnaire included seven items regarding student-teachers' perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers. The responses are presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
44	programme adequately covers all academic subject which are relevant to early childhood stage	**25**	**23.4**	**53**	**49.5**	**20**	**18.7**	**9**	**8.4**		
45	programme design is beneficial because it includes theoretical and practical sessions	**26**	**24.3**	**56**	**52.3**	**18**	**16.8**	**6**	**5.6**	**1**	**.9**
46	programme gives student-teachers the knowledge and skills to teach pre-school children	**40**	**37.4**	**58**	**54.2**	**8**	**7.5**	**1**	**.9**		
47	teaching modules in this programme are progressive and well organized	**37**	**34.6**	**55**	**51.4**	**9**	**8.4**	**6**	**5.6**		
48	time scale of the programme (8 levels/ 4 years, consisting of 56 modules) enables student-teachers to be sufficiently prepared for teaching	**44**	**41.1**	**39**	**36.4**	**16**	**15.0**	**5**	**4.7**	**3**	**2.8**
49	all educational and the general preparation modules (50 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**38**	**35.5**	**49**	**45.8**	**12**	**11.2**	**2**	**1.9**	**6**	**5.6**
50	all specialized modules (78 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**38**	**35.5**	**49**	**45.8**	**11**	**10.3**	**5**	**4.7**	**4**	**3.7**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

Part four: Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

The fourth part of the student-teacher questionnaire included six items to illuminate student-teachers' perceptions of internal and external constraints affecting the effectiveness of the programme. It also provided a background picture of the educational environment in which Saudi student-teachers learn and teach. The responses are presented in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
51	non-compliance of the student-teacher for studying previous requirements	**23**	**21.5**	**37**	**34.6**	**27**	**25.2**	**15**	**14.0**	**5**	**4.7**
52	number of student-teachers in class is very large	**15**	**14.0**	**30**	**28.0**	**28**	**26.2**	**32**	**29.9**	**2**	**1.9**
53	lack of interest among some student-teachers to work with pre-school children	**34**	**31.8**	**33**	**30.8**	**23**	**21.5**	**13**	**12.1**	**4**	**3.7**
54	learning environment at the college doesn't encourage learning and sound understanding	**22**	**20.6**	**26**	**24.3**	**29**	**27.1**	**23**	**21.5**	**7**	**6.5**
55	the university web doesn't provide adequately the necessary information about the modules	**36**	**33.6**	**24**	**22.4**	**28**	**26.2**	**15**	**14.0**	**4**	**3.7**
56	lack of kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers	**69**	**64.5**	**22**	**20.6**	**6**	**5.6**	**5**	**4.7**	**5**	**4.7**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree

Part five: Further comments

Student-teachers were asked to write down any further comments about the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers. Only 27 out of 107 student-teachers put in writing their comments and suggestions about their taught programme, some of which are detailed as follows:

Student-teachers made the following positive comments:

- the programme was comprehensive and it did not need additions (N= 2 of 27)

Student-teachers made the following negative comments:

- registration system on the university web did not allow for all student-teachers to enrol on all modules appropriate for the study level (N= 1 of 27)
- professors did not take into account the circumstances of the student-teachers (N= 2 of 27)

Student-teachers made the following suggestions:

- a kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers (N= 12 of 27)
- student-teachers are not encumbered with a lot of work (N= 3 of 27)
- increase the number of visits to kindergarten to enable student-teachers know more about children (N= 3 of 27)
- reduce the number of modules, especially educational and the general modules (N= 1 of 27)
- the number of practical sessions should be higher than theoretical sessions (N= 2 of 27)
- student-teachers should be prepared only in the university, there is no need for teaching practice at kindergarten (N= 1 of 27)
- student-teachers who will join the Kindergarten Major should be interested in working with pre-school children (N= 1 of 27).

It was observed from these comments that the majority of student-teachers (N= 12 of 27) suggested having a kindergarten attached to the college to facilitate better knowledge of children by the student-teachers, and they considered this kindergarten as a very important element in their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers. This finding emerged at this stage of the study with the first year student-teachers, and was subsequently confirmed many times in the data from second, third and fourth year student-teachers.

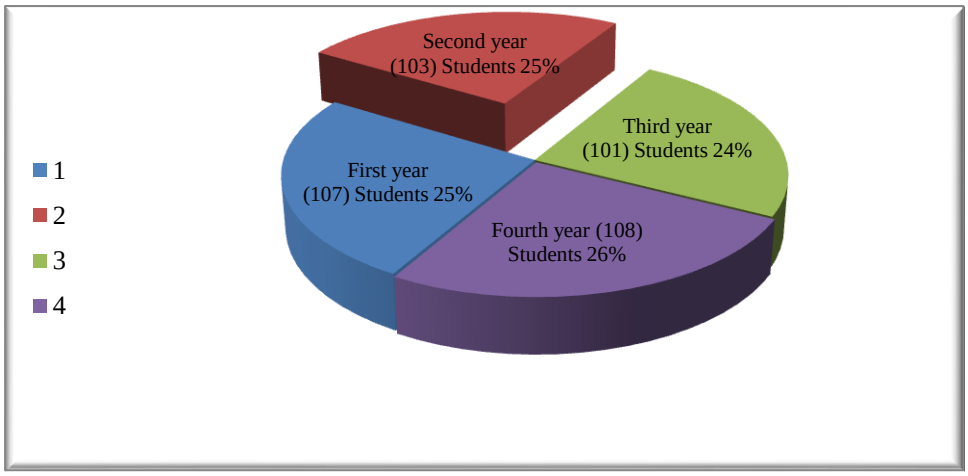
5.2 Analysis of Questionnaire from Second Year Student-teachers

Part one: General information

1. Year of study

Figure 5.1 shows that there were 103 student-teachers from the second study year in the sample, with 16 of them in level 3 and 87 in level 4.

Figure 5.2 Second year



2. Interest in working with pre-school children

Student-teachers were asked whether they were interested in working with pre-school children or not; Table 5.10 shows their responses.

Table 5.10 Interest in working with pre-school children

Second year	N	%
Not interested	12	11.7
Interested	91	88.3
Total	103	100.0

3. Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme at the College of Education

Only four of 103 student-teachers did not answer this question. There were no differences in responses between student-teachers who were interested in working with pre-school children and those who were not. Ninety nine student-teachers' responses giving their reasons for joining the kindergarten programme were grouped into the following categories in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11 Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme

Reasons			N
Internal	**Personal**	for love of children	56
		enhancing knowledge and experience of children	7
		suitable for my personal needs as mother	
		keeps me in touch with the realities of life	6
		benefit me in education of my children in the future	21
		prepare a strong generation	15
		Total	**105**
	Capacity	suitable for my capacity in interaction with children	7
		getting a high degree in secondary school	1
		Total	**8**
	Informatics	student-teachers like to know about the following:	
		the world of childhood	2
		child psychology	4
		what a child loves	
		how to interact with children	11
		how to handle childhood problems	1
		the appropriate activities for the child's abilities	
		child needs	
		child characteristics	4
		child preparation for transition to primary school life	
		children's health problems and how to overcome them	
		food suitable for children	
		help children to encounter future life in correct way	
		Total	**12**
External	**Society**	affecting others	1
		there are wrong beliefs about children in society	
		behaviour of people around me towards children is wrong	
		society encourages to join the kindergarten programme	1
		Total	**2**
	University	it is a new major in university	6
		the absence of other desirable majors at university	9
		university policy followed in the admission of students	5
		it is an interesting major	7
		t is an easy major	4
		Total	**31**
	Job	opportunity to get a job	6

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

4. Module content on the Kindergarten Major

The student-teachers' responses regarding the content of modules are presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 Module content

The content of modules	N	%
Useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children	34	33.0
Not useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children	1	1.0
Some of them are useful and some need to be reconsidered	68	66.0
Total	103	100.0

5. The extent to which student-teachers perceive the content of the modules as useful, and reasons for this

Although all student-teachers in the second study year responded to the previous question, some (N= 14) did not respond to the current question.

On the one hand, Table 5.13 below shows student-teachers' reasons for thinking that the modules were useful as a preparation for working with children. Eight student-teachers did not provide their reasons. I coded student-teachers' reasons into two categories, as shown in Table 5.13. One student-teacher made the following positive comment:

> *Modules are integrated with each other and they take into account the needs and characteristics of the child at the pre-school stage. They cover all aspects of the growth of the child in terms of cognitive, emotional and physical/motor aspects.*

Table 5.13 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that the modules are useful

Reasons	N
Modules are comprehensive for all child's learning and development areas	16
Modules develop student's knowledge and experience for child's learning and development	10
No response	8
Total	34

Of 34 student-teachers, 10 were within the second category which was titled "*Modules develop student-teacher's knowledge and experience for child's learning*

and development". Student-teacher's reasons to think that the modules were useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children can be seen in the following three extracts:

> *All modules are related to how teacher is prepared for her profession efficiently. They develop my knowledge and experience about child's learning and development. They help student-teachers to design games and activities suitable for the child's abilities. These modules provide student-teachers knowledge about the pre-school child characteristics, and the children's needs and how teachers meet those needs.*
>
> *The modules teach us how interact with children and deal with their problems correctly, and how to evaluate the children and kindergarten. Moreover, they teach us how to encourage children's imaginative thinking, and the development of creativity and innovation in gifted children.*
>
> *Since student-teachers will be married and they will have children, these modules benefit them in education their children and prepare children for their future lives.*

On the other hand, 68 student-teachers in the previous question said that some modules were useful and some needed to be reconsidered. Six of them did not provide their reasons. It is worth mentioning that some student-teachers put more than one reason behind their thinking that some modules needed to be reconsidered, with less focus on the reasons for the usefulness of the modules. 62 student-teachers' responses are presented in Table 5.14

Table 5.14 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that some modules are useful and some need to be reconsidered

Reasons		**N**
Some modules are useful	Keeps student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	7 of 62
Some modules need to be reconsidered	Do not keep student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	21 of 62
	Repeated knowledge	42 of 62
	There is no link between practical and theoretical part for some modules	7 of 62
	A lot of activities in some of the modules	1 of 62
	Many modules are taught	
	Teaching style not effective	1 of 62
	There is no focusing on pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children	1 of 62

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

Seven student-teachers said that modules kept student-teachers in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice, they ensured that modules provided very important knowledge related to children's psychology, and the way the trainees interact with children at kindergarten. In contrast, 21 student-teachers said that modules did not keep them in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice. They expressed the view that modules contained too many theories or they did not relate to Kindergarten Major. Moreover, out of 62 student-teachers, 42 asserted that there was repetition of the content of some modules, as illustrated in the following extracts:

> *A lot of modules benefit the student to work with pre-school children, but some of them contain a lot of theories or do not relate to Kindergarten Major. They will not be utilized in the teaching practice and interacting with children at kindergarten. On the other hand, much of the knowledge is repeated in a dull.*

> *Some of modules are repeated in knowledge, no need to study them again because this will waste time and effort on lecturer and student. However, some modules are wonderful and very beneficial because they Keep student in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice. They provide knowledge to know about children's psychology.*

Regarding the student-teacher who thought that modules were not useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children, she agreed with seven student-teachers who thought that there was no link between the practical and theoretical part for some modules. In addition, she asserted that a few months (three months maximum) for teaching practice do not qualify a student-teacher sufficiently to be a kindergarten teacher:

> *We are studying theoretical much, I was thinking for some time, if I stood in front of the children, can I deal with them? My answer was resounding "No". Moreover, I think that a few months for teaching practice does not qualify me enough to be a kindergarten teacher.*

Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

1. Knowledge of children's learning and development

Table 5.15 presents student-teachers' responses regarding whether they in their kindergarten programme should have knowledge about a child's learning and development, as follows:

Table 5.15 Knowledge of children's learning and development

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	child development theories	32	31.1	48	46.6	13	12.6	8	7.8	2	1.9
7	pre-school child characteristics	70	68.0	30	29.1	3	2.9				
8	children's needs and how teachers meet those needs	73	70.9	24	23.3	5	4.9	1	1.0		
9	supporting child's moral, mental, physical growth in a natural environment similar to child's family environment	69	67.0	29	28.2	5	4.9				
10	supporting children's Islamic religious beliefs in the oneness of God	76	73.8	20	19.4	6	5.8	1	1.0		
11	play and the importance of play in kindergarten child's learning	79	76.7	22	21.4	2	1.9				
12	pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children	33	32.0	54	52.4	9	8.7	6	5.8	1	1.0
13	the methods of child raising	60	58.3	29	28.2	8	7.8	5	4.9	1	1.0
14	childhood problems and how to handle educational and behavioural problems	69	67.0	28	27.2	5	4.9			1	1.0
15	child protection against dangers	60	58.3	29	28.2	11	10.7	2	1.9	1	1.0
16	how to interact with children and adults at kindergarten, and parents	45	43.7	49	47.6	8	7.8	1	1.0		
17	roles and functions of a kindergarten teacher in field experience (teaching context)	49	47.6	40	38.8	9	8.7	5	4.9		
18	child preparation for transition to primary school life	61	59.2	32	31.1	7	6.8	3	2.9		
19	aims and content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia	37	35.9	43	41.7	17	16.5	3	2.9	3	2.9

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

2. Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

Student-teachers indicated their opinions regarding whether they in their kindergarten programme should be adequately trained to do the following (see Table 5.16):

Table 5.16 Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
20	provide children with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their age	64	62.1	35	34.0	3	2.9	1	1.0		
21	create appropriate activities whether inside or outside the classroom for children's abilities	57	55.3	37	35.9	7	6.8	2	1.9		
22	plan group and individual activities for kindergarten children	51	49.5	51	49.5			1	1.0		
23	plan child-initiated activities, including play	47	45.6	42	40.8	10	9.7	3	2.9	1	1.0
24	plan adult-directed activities	29	28.2	51	49.5	13	12.6	10	9.7		
25	design activities fostering intellectual development of kindergarten children	53	51.5	42	40.8	6	5.8	2	1.9		
26	design activities fostering motor/ physical skills of kindergarten children	63	61.2	33	32.0	6	5.8	1	1.0		
27	design activities fostering emotional development of kindergarten children	59	57.3	37	35.9	6	5.8	1	1.0		
28	design activities associated with child's learning of the scientific and mathematical concepts	48	46.6	46	44.7	6	5.8	2	1.9	1	1.0
29	design activities associated with development of the linguistic skills of kindergarten children	55	53.4	42	40.8	4	3.9	1	1.0	1	1.0
30	design activities that contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of kindergarten children	60	58.3	37	35.9	4	3.9	1	1.0	1	1.0
31	design activities to foster the KSA cultural customs and beliefs of kindergarten children	48	46.6	42	40.8	8	7.8	3	2.9	2	1.9
32	design activities to prepare the child for reading and writing	54	52.4	37	35.9	9	8.7	2	1.9	1	1.0
33	design and produce educational aids appropriate for kindergarten children	44	42.7	42	40.8	14	13.6	2	1.9	1	1.0
34	design and produce educational games appropriate for kindergarten children	46	44.7	41	39.8	12	11.7	2	1.9	2	1.9
35	use local materials properly to design educational activities	54	52.4	34	33.0	10	9.7	3	2.9	2	1.9
36	acquire educational qualifications that distinguish them from other stage teachers	53	51.5	35	34.0	12	11.7	2	1.9	1	1.0
37	design educational context to enable children to learn	50	48.5	39	37.9	12	11.7	2	1.9		
38	teach the subject areas of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA	38	36.9	40	38.8	16	15.5	8	7.8	1	1.0

39	assess children's learning and development across the KSA national curriculum	**36**	**35.0**	**45**	**43.7**	**16**	**15.5**	**4**	**3.9**	**2**	**1.9**
40	manage classrooms effectively	**53**	**51.5**	**40**	**38.8**	**9**	**8.7**	**1**	**1.0**		
41	encourage children's imaginative thinking	**63**	**61.2**	**29**	**28.2**	**6**	**5.8**	**4**	**3.9**	**1**	**1.0**
42	design educational unit for kindergarten children	**43**	**41.7**	**43**	**41.7**	**15**	**14.6**	**2**	**1.9**		
43	design and manage the kindergarten programme	**35**	**34.0**	**45**	**43.7**	**16**	**15.5**	**4**	**3.9**	**3**	**2.9**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

Part three: Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

Student-teachers' perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers are presented in Table 5.17 below.

Table 5.17 Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
44	programme adequately covers all academic subject which are relevant to early childhood stage	**44**	**42.7**	**35**	**34.0**	**16**	**15.5**	**7**	**6.8**	**1**	**1.0**
45	programme design is beneficial because it includes theoretical and practical sessions	**40**	**38.8**	**36**	**35.0**	**16**	**15.5**	**8**	**7.8**	**3**	**2.9**
46	programme gives student-teachers the knowledge and skills to teach pre-school children	**50**	**48.5**	**40**	**38.8**	**6**	**5.8**	**5**	**4.9**	**2**	**1.9**
47	teaching modules in this programme are progressive and well organized	**47**	**45.6**	**35**	**34.0**	**16**	**15.5**	**4**	**3.9**	**1**	**1.0**
48	time scale of the programme (8 levels/4 years, consisting of 56 modules) enables student-teachers to be sufficiently prepared for teaching	**44**	**42.7**	**32**	**31.1**	**17**	**16.5**	**7**	**6.8**	**3**	**2.9**
49	all educational and the general preparation modules (50 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**29**	**28.2**	**36**	**35.0**	**19**	**18.4**	**13**	**12.6**	**6**	**5.8**
50	all specialized modules (78 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**37**	**35.9**	**32**	**31.1**	**17**	**16.5**	**13**	**12.6**	**4**	**3.9**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree

Part four: Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

Student-teachers' responses regarding the internal and external constraints affecting the effectiveness of the programme are presented in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18 Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
51	non-compliance of the student-teacher for studying previous requirements	**29**	**28.2**	**33**	**32.0**	**20**	**19.4**	**21**	**20.4**		
52	number of student-teachers in class is very large	**32**	**31.1**	**28**	**27.2**	**20**	**19.4**	**17**	**16.5**	**6**	**5.8**
53	lack of interest among some student-teachers to work with pre-school children	**40**	**38.8**	**33**	**32.0**	**17**	**16.5**	**9**	**8.7**	**4**	**3.9**
54	learning environment at the college doesn't encourage learning and sound understanding	**27**	**26.2**	**28**	**27.2**	**20**	**19.4**	**24**	**23.3**	**4**	**3.9**
55	the university web doesn't provide adequately the necessary information about the modules	**37**	**35.9**	**17**	**16.5**	**25**	**24.3**	**23**	**22.3**	**1**	**1.0**
56	lack of kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers	**66**	**64.1**	**21**	**20.4**	**6**	**5.8**	**8**	**7.8**	**2**	**1.9**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

Part five: Further comments

Out of 103 student-teachers, only 44 wrote their comments and suggestions about their programme, as follows:

Student-teachers made the following positive comments:

- the programme was interesting and a good major (N= 1 of 44)

Student-teachers made the following negative comments:

- the content of modules was repeated in knowledge (N= 11 of 44)
- there were modules unrelated to Kindergarten Major (N= 3 of 44)
- the teaching style was not effective (N= 6 of 44)
- the content of modules was very long (N= 2 of 44)
- the time allocated to lectures was very long (3 hours connected) (N= 5 of 44)

Student-teachers made the following suggestions:

- to have a kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers (N= 16 of 44).
- student-teachers are not encumbered with a lot of work (N= 4 of 44).
- increase the number of visits to children at kindergarten to help student-teachers know more about children (N= 1 of 44).
- Reduce the number of modules, especially educational and the general modules (N= 4 of 44).
- numbers of practical work should be higher than theoretical sessions (N= 4 of 44).
- student-teachers who will join the Kindergarten Major should be interested in working with pre-school children (N= 1 of 44).
- interview student-teacher before her admission to the Kindergarten Major (N= 4 of 44).
- availability of rooms for activities and private stores for keeping the tools, materials, thus reducing wastage and chaos (N= 4 of 44).

It was observed from the above comments that over a third of student-teachers (N= 16 of 44) suggested having a kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *It is necessary that there is attached kindergarten to the college for the training of student-teachers correctly. This will help student-teachers to know the educational context in kindergarten. Also for presenting student-teachers' work, it is necessary availability of large rooms for activities which are equipped in a manner different from the regular classrooms that are of theoretical lectures. And private stores for keeping the tools, materials and productions of loss and devastation.*

Also, it was noted that 11 of the 44 student-teachers stated that the content of the course was repeated in some modules. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *… the content of some modules is very long, and some of them are repeated in knowledge. This causes boredom for students, we need this time to provide for us a new and useful knowledge. Also, I see that the time allocated of lectures is very long. It is three hours connected that bring fatigue and absent-mindedness of the students.*

Moreover, it was interesting that four student-teachers asserted the importance of interviewing student-teachers before their admission to the Kindergarten Major. One student-teacher's comment can be seen in the following extract:

> *It is essential that there is a test determines whether student-teacher is qualified for this major. Student-teachers should be picked for Kindergarten Major through a personal interview because there are personal and educational qualifications that distinguish kindergarten teachers from other stage teachers. I find some student do not have these qualifications to become kindergarten teachers. There is no fitness, no fun, and no movement.*

Another student-teacher added:

> *Student-teachers are encumbered with a lot of work, where the content of modules is very long and much effort is given on the assignments and activities. However, these assignments and activities leave the opportunity for creativity and innovation.*

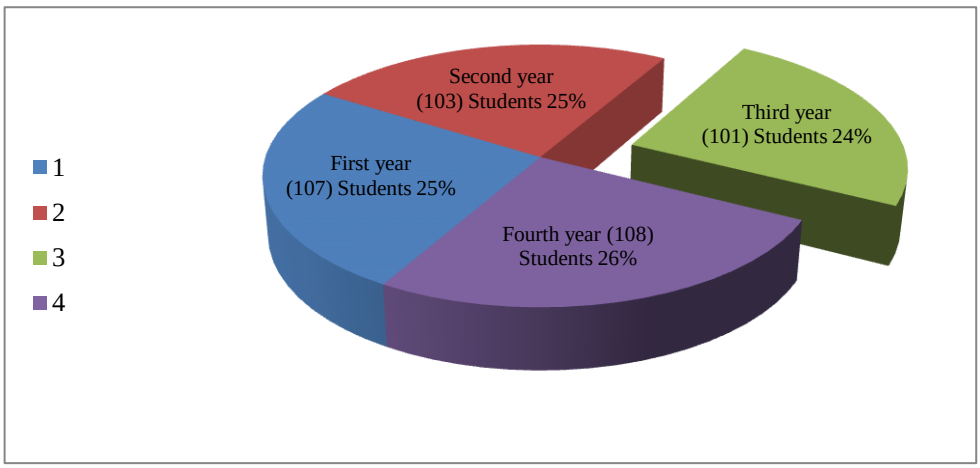
5.3 Analysis of Questionnaire from Third Year Student-teachers

Part One: General information

1. Year of study

Figure 5.3 shows that there were 101 student-teachers from the third study year in the sample, with 27 in level 5 and 74 in level 6.

Figure 5.3 Third year



2. Interest in working with pre-school children

Student-teachers were asked whether they were interested in working with pre-school children. The findings from their data are presented in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19 Interest in working with pre-school children

Third year	N	%
Not interested	15	14.9
Interested	86	85.1
Total	101	100.0

3. Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme at the College of Education

Only five of 101 student-teachers did not answer this question. There were no differences in responses between student-teachers who were interested in working with pre-school children and those who were not. The ninety six student-teacher responses regarding their reasons for joining the kindergarten programme were grouped into the categories shown in Table 5.20.

Table 5.20 Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme

Reasons			N
Internal	**Personal**	for love of children	48
		enhancing knowledge and experience of children	7
		suitable for my personal needs as mother	4
		keeps me in touch with the realities of life	1
		benefit me in education of my children in the future	14
		prepare a strong generation	9
		Total	**83**
	Capacity	suitable for my capacity in interaction with children	1
		getting a high degree in secondary school	3
		Total	**4**
	Informatics	student-teachers like to know about the following:	
		the world of childhood	4
		child psychology	4
		what a child loves	
		how to interact with children	9
		how to handle childhood problems	3
		the appropriate activities for the child's abilities	
		child needs	
		child characteristics	4
		child preparation for transition to primary school life	
		children's health problems and how to overcome them	
		food suitable for children	
		help children to encounter future life in correct way	
		Total	**24**
External	**Society**	affecting others	
		there are wrong beliefs about children in society	
		behaviour of people around me towards children is wrong	
		society encourages to join the kindergarten programme	
		Total	**0**
	University	it is a new major in university	8
		the absence of other desirable majors at university	20
		university policy followed in the admission of students	4
		it is an interesting major	11
		It is an easy major	3
		Total	**46**
	Job	opportunity to get a job	9

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

4. Module content on the Kindergarten Major

The student-teachers' responses regarding the content of modules are presented in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21 Module content

The content of modules	N	%
Useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children	42	41.6
Not useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children		
Some of them are useful and some need to be reconsidered	59	58.4
Total	101	100.0

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

5. The extent to which student-teachers perceive the content of the modules as useful, and reasons for this

Although all student-teachers responded to the previous question, seven did not respond to the current question. The reasons given by student-teachers for the relative usefulness of the modules preparing them for working with children were divided into two categories, as shown in Table 5.22 overleaf. One student-teacher made the following positive comment:

> *They help student-teacher to know about kindergartens' contexts, children's needs and characteristics. They train student-teachers to know how to deal/interact with children. They provide educational activities and programmes that benefit the mother and her child. I feel that these modules have given me a lot of skills and development aspects of my personality which are the basis for teacher performance.*

Another student-teacher added:

> *They prepare qualified kindergarten teachers who are able to deal/interact with children. They contain knowledge related the child's learning and development.*

Table 5.22 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that the modules are useful

Reasons	N
Modules are comprehensive for all child's learning and development areas	25
Modules develop student's knowledge and experience for child's learning and development	13
No response	4
Total	42

Student-teachers within the second category explained why they thought that the modules were useful. For example, one student-teacher said:

> *They have given me knowledge and experiences for child's learning and development that I did not know before. For example, the methods of dealing/interacting with children and how children gain experiences appropriate to their ages, with an emphasis on diversification of experiences.*

Another student-teacher added:

> *They contain things that helped us as student-teachers or as mothers in our daily lives with our children and our young siblings. Especially in understanding their feelings, needs and desires, and how we meet those needs and desires. As well as, how we design play and games that fit the level of all stages of growth in kindergarten (Kg1, Kg2, Kg3).*

On the other hand, while 59 student-teachers in the previous question said that some modules were useful and some needed to be reconsidered, three of them did not give their reasons. So, 56 student-teachers' reasons are presented in Table 5.23.

Table 5.23 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that some modules are useful and some need to be reconsidered

Reasons		**N**
Some modules are useful	Keeps student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	14 of 56
Some modules need to be reconsidered	Do not keep student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	17 of 56
	Repeated knowledge	44 of 56
	There is no link between practical and theoretical part for some modules	5 of 56
	A lot of activities in some of the modules	2 of 56
	Many modules are taught	1 of 56
	Teaching style not effective	
	There is no focusing on daily programme in kindergarten	1 of 56

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

It can be seen that 14 student-teachers said that modules kept student-teachers in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice. They ensured that modules provided knowledge related to children's learning and development, and how student-teachers interact with children. One student-teacher illustrated this in the following extract:

I am now able to prepare activities for the development of concepts in children from setting aims to assess the activity. I learned how to design an educational environment under appropriate conditions. Also, I am able to develop solutions to some problems of children and the best approach to taken them. However, some of them are repeated in some knowledge in more than module.

Another student-teacher added:

Some of the modules are very beneficial for us, they are talking about kindergartens and the characteristics of the child's development. Others talk about things that are not related to specialization such as theories. We wish to intensify practical modules in order to we can have more training.

Regarding theoretical and practical modules, one student-teacher's comment was:

Some modules include the topics we study theoretically without knowing the application for them. For example, we studied children's theatre and stories without our training on how we apply different voices to perform the story, and how to perform stories' roles whether for me or for children

Two student-teachers said that there were many activities in some of the modules. One student-teacher's comment was:

The works and activities are a lot and very tiring. Even in the time of examinations we have hard work continuously, and many of the activities and duties required from lecturers are at the same time.

Out of 56 student-teachers, 44 said that there was repetition of some modules' content. One student-teacher's comment was:

There are a number of modules are repeated in knowledge significantly, this leading to boredom in the educational process and waste of time, and lack of interest. For example, 'The Development of Linguistic Skills' module is repeated with 'Preparation of the Child for Reading and Writing' module. We prefer that there are new topics are more important and additions have more value, rather than the repetition that is not benefiting

When one student-teacher in the third year illustrated that there was a lack of some knowledge in the programme, she said:

Some modules need to more enrich in knowledge, they lack definition of student-teachers to daily kindergarten programme. However, we knew that from our visit through 'the field practice' module

Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

1. Knowledge of children's learning and development

Table 5.24 presents student-teachers' responses as to whether they in their kindergarten programme should have knowledge about children's learning and development as follows:

Table 5.24 Knowledge of children's learning and development

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	child development theories	35	34.7	37	36.6	16	15.8	11	10.9	2	2.0
7	pre-school child characteristics	65	64.4	33	32.7	2	2.0	1	1.0		
8	children's needs and how teachers meet those needs	69	68.3	25	24.8	7	6.9				
9	supporting child's moral, mental, physical growth in a natural environment similar to child's family environment	64	63.4	32	31.7	3	3.0	2	2.0		
10	supporting children's Islamic religious beliefs in the oneness of God	73	72.3	23	22.8	4	4.0	1	1.0		
11	play and the importance of play in kindergarten child's learning	79	78.2	19	18.8	3	3.0				
12	pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children	40	39.6	38	37.6	16	15.8	5	5.0	2	2.0
13	the methods of child raising	51	50.5	35	34.7	11	10.9	3	3.0	1	1.0
14	childhood problems and how to handle educational and behavioural problems	70	69.3	26	25.7	4	4.0	1	1.0		
15	child protection against dangers	45	44.6	45	44.6	10	9.9			1	1.0
16	how to interact with children and adults at kindergarten, and parents	46	45.5	42	41.6	10	9.9	3	3.0		
17	roles and functions of a kindergarten teacher in field experience (teaching context)	44	43.6	40	39.6	14	13.9	3	3.0		
18	child preparation for transition to primary school life	41	40.6	43	42.6	11	10.9	5	5.0	1	1.0
19	aims and content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia	39	38.6	35	34.7	19	18.8	7	6.9	1	1.0

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

2. Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

Table 5.25 shows student-teachers' opinions as to whether they should be adequately trained to do the following:

Table 5.25 Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
20	provide children with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their age	**56**	**55.4**	**41**	**40.6**	**3**	**3.0**	**1**	**1.0**		
21	create appropriate activities whether inside or outside the classroom for children's abilities	**47**	**46.5**	**43**	**42.6**	**9**	**8.9**	**2**	**2.0**		
22	plan group and individual activities for kindergarten children	**55**	**54.5**	**35**	**34.7**	**11**	**10.9**				
23	plan child-initiated activities, including play	**47**	**46.5**	**37**	**36.6**	**14**	**13.9**	**3**	**3.9**		
24	plan adult-directed activities	**30**	**29.7**	**39**	**38.6**	**20**	**19.8**	**10**	**9.9**	**2**	**2.0**
25	design activities fostering intellectual development of kindergarten children	**48**	**47.5**	**41**	**40.6**	**9**	**8.9**	**3**	**3.0**		
26	design activities fostering motor/ physical skills of kindergarten children	**49**	**48.5**	**42**	**41.6**	**7**	**6.9**	**2**	**2.0**	**1**	**1.0**
27	design activities fostering emotional development of kindergarten children	**44**	**43.6**	**43**	**42.6**	**8**	**7.9**	**4**	**4.0**	**2**	**2.0**
28	design activities associated with child's learning of the scientific and mathematical concepts	**43**	**42.6**	**45**	**44.6**	**8**	**7.9**	**5**	**5.0**		
29	design activities associated with development of the linguistic skills of kindergarten children	**50**	**49.5**	**42**	**41.6**	**5**	**5.0**	**4**	**4.0**		
30	design activities that contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of kindergarten children	**53**	**52.5**	**37**	**36.6**	**9**	**8.9**	**2**	**2.0**		
31	design activities to foster the KSA cultural customs and beliefs of kindergarten children	**45**	**44.6**	**33**	**32.7**	**18**	**17.8**	**4**	**4.0**	**1**	**1.0**
32	design activities to prepare the child for reading and writing	**45**	**44.6**	**40**	**39.6**	**10**	**9.9**	**4**	**4.0**	**2**	**2.0**
33	design and produce educational aids appropriate for kindergarten children	**37**	**36.6**	**40**	**39.6**	**16**	**15.8**	**8**	**7.9**		
34	design and produce educational games appropriate for kindergarten children	**38**	**37.6**	**45**	**44.6**	**11**	**10.9**	**7**	**6.9**		
35	use local materials properly to design educational activities	**37**	**36.6**	**47**	**46.5**	**13**	**12.9**	**2**	**2.0**	**2**	**2.0**

36	acquire educational qualifications that distinguish them from other stage teachers	**54**	**53.5**	**29**	**28.7**	**14**	**13.9**	**4**	**4.0**		
37	design educational context to enable children to learn	**45**	**44.6**	**40**	**39.6**	**14**	**13.9**	**1**	**1.0**	**1**	**1.0**
38	teach the subject areas of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA	**33**	**32.7**	**39**	**38.6**	**20**	**19.8**	**9**	**8.9**		
39	assess children's learning and development across the KSA national curriculum	**36**	**35.6**	**38**	**37.6**	**19**	**18.8**	**8**	**7.9**		
40	manage classrooms effectively	**55**	**54.5**	**34**	**33.7**	**9**	**8.9**	**1**	**1.0**	**2**	**2.0**
41	encourage children's imaginative thinking	**55**	**54.5**	**34**	**33.7**	**8**	**7.9**	**3**	**3.0**	**1**	**1.0**
42	design educational unit for kindergarten children	**38**	**37.6**	**38**	**37.6**	**17**	**16.8**	**6**	**5.9**	**2**	**2.0**
43	design and manage the kindergarten programme	**42**	**41.6**	**36**	**35.6**	**19**	**18.8**	**3**	**3.0**	**1**	**1.0**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box= None

Part three: Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

The responses concerning the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers are presented in Table 5.26 below.

Table 5.26 Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
44	programme adequately covers all academic subject which are relevant to early childhood stage	**26**	**25.7**	**39**	**38.6**	**21**	**20.8**	**13**	**12.9**	**2**	**2.0**
45	programme design is beneficial because it includes theoretical and practical sessions	**31**	**30.7**	**51**	**50.5**	**11**	**10.9**	**6**	**5.9**	**2**	**2.9**
46	programme gives student-teachers the knowledge and skills to teach pre-school children	**42**	**41.6**	**46**	**45.5**	**10**	**9.9**	**3**	**3.0**		
47	teaching modules in this programme are progressive and well organized	**34**	**33.7**	**32**	**31.7**	**16**	**15.8**	**11**	**10.9**	**8**	**7.9**
48	time scale of the programme (8 levels/ 4 years, consisting of 56 modules) enables student-teachers to be sufficiently prepared for teaching	**41**	**40.6**	**28**	**27.7**	**23**	**22.8**	**8**	**7.9**	**1**	**1.0**
49	all educational and the general preparation modules (50 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**36**	**35.6**	**30**	**29.7**	**21**	**20.8**	**12**	**11.9**	**2**	**2.0**

50	all specialized modules (78 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**39**	**38.6**	**26**	**25.7**	**21**	**20.8**	**12**	**11.9**	**3**	**3.0**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

Part four: Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

Student-teachers' responses regarding internal and external constraints affecting the effectiveness of the programme are presented in Table 5.27.

Table 5.27 Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
51	non-compliance of the student-teacher for studying previous requirements	**32**	**31.7**	**37**	**36.6**	**21**	**20.8**	**9**	**8.9**	**2**	**2.0**
52	number of student-teachers in class is very large	**35**	**34.7**	**31**	**30.7**	**25**	**24.8**	**9**	**8.9**	**1**	**1.0**
53	lack of interest among some student-teachers to work with pre-school children	**44**	**43.6**	**27**	**26.7**	**21**	**20.8**	**5**	**5.0**	**4**	**4.0**
54	learning environment at the college doesn't encourage learning and sound understanding	**25**	**24.8**	**25**	**24.8**	**27**	**26.7**	**19**	**18.8**	**5**	**5.0**
55	the university web doesn't provide adequately the necessary information about the modules	**46**	**45.5**	**30**	**29.7**	**14**	**13.9**	**9**	**8.9**	**2**	**2.0**
56	lack of kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers	**80**	**79.2**	**12**	**11.9**	**4**	**4.0**	**2**	**2.0**	**3**	**3.0**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree

Part five: Further comments

Student-teachers were asked to write down any further comments about their professional preparation, but only 43 student-teachers put in writing their comments and suggestions as following:

Student-teachers made the following positive comments:

- the programme was very suitable for the preparation of kindergarten teachers (N= 3 of 43)

Student-teachers made the following negative comments:

- some kindergartens did not give student-teachers the opportunity to operate freely (N= 1 of 43)
- there were no Saudi lecturers in Kindergarten Major (N= 1 of 43)
- the content of modules was repeated in knowledge (N= 16 of 43)
- the teaching style was not effective (N= 5 of 43)
- the content of modules was very long (N= 1 of 43)
- the time allocated to lectures was very long (3 hours connected) (N= 1 of 43)

Student-teachers made the following suggestions:

- a kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers (N= 6 of 43)
- adding more intensive knowledge and experiences in the modules' contents (N= 4 of 43)
- student-teachers are not encumbered with a lot of work (N= 10 of 43)
- increase the number of visits for children at kindergarten to know student-teachers more about children (N= 1 of 43)
- reduce the number of modules, especially educational and the general modules (N= 5 of 43)
- the number of practical sessions should be higher than theoretical sessions (N= 6 of 43)
- interview student-teacher before her admission to the Kindergarten Major (N= 2 of 43)
- availability of rooms for practical activities and private stores for keeping the tools, materials, thus reducing wastage and chaos (N= 4 of 43)
- the tools and materials are provided for the student-teachers free of charge (N= 2 of 43)

It can be observed from these comments that over a third of student-teachers (N=16 of 43) thought that content was repeated in different modules. Additionally, ten of them suggested that it was a very important element in their preparation that they should not be overburdened with extra work. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *Most of the duties and works develop student-teachers' skills, but it is necessary that not ask the student-teachers a lot of work and researches, they are many duties.*

Regarding four student-teachers' suggestions about adding more intensive knowledge and experiences to the module contents, they focused on these topics: (a) kindergarten curriculum in KSA; (b) how to read stories to children; and (c) how to develop play with children. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *We need module which addresses specifically kindergarten curriculum in KSA because it will explain for student-teachers the real situation of kindergarten curriculum in KSA before the field practice stage, and so there is no separation between what we have studied and what will we work in*

Another student-teacher added:

> *In this Kindergarten Major, we need to study some topics about how to read the story for children, and how to develop play with children.*

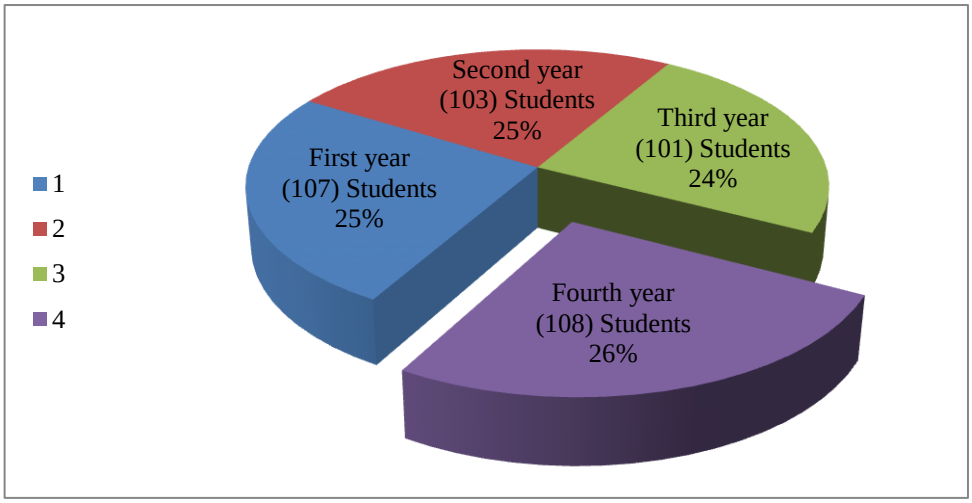
5.4 Analysis of Questionnaire from Fourth Year Student-teachers

Part One: General information

1. Year of study

Figure 5.4 shows that there were 108 student-teachers from the fourth study year in the sample.

Figure 5.4 Fourth year



2. Interest in working with pre-school children

Table 5.28 presents interesting data on the question of whether student-teachers were interested in working with pre-school children.

Table 5.28 Interest in working with pre-school children

Fourth year	N	%
Not interested	10	9.3
Interested	98	90.7
Total	108	100.0

3. Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme at the College of Education

Only four out of 108 student-teachers did not answer this question. There were no differences in responses between student-teachers who were interested in working with pre-school children and those who were not. Table 5.29 shows student-teachers' reasons for joining this programme; they were grouped into the following categories:

Table 5.29 Reasons for joining the kindergarten programme

Reasons			N
Internal	**Personal**	for love of children	53
		enhancing knowledge and experience of children	5
		suitable for my personal needs as mother	10
		keeps me in touch with the realities of life	
		benefit me in education of my children in the future	7
		prepare a strong generation	6
		Total	**81**
	Capacity	suitable for my capacity in interaction with children	1
		getting a high degree in secondary school	
		Total	**1**
	Informatics	student-teachers like to know about the following:	
		the world of childhood	10
		child psychology	
		what a child loves	1
		how to interact with children	3
		how to handle childhood problems	4
		the appropriate activities for the child's abilities	1
		child needs	1
		child characteristics	2
		child preparation for transition to primary school life	2
		children's health problems and how to overcome them	
		food suitable for children	
		help children to encounter future life in correct way	
		Total	**24**
External	**Society**	affecting others	2
		there are wrong beliefs about children in society	2
		behaviour of people around me towards children is wrong	2
		society encourages to join the kindergarten programme	2
		Total	**8**
	University	it is a new major in university	30
		the absence of other desirable majors at university	15
		university policy followed in the admission of students	1
		it is as interesting major	17
		it is an easy major	3
		Total	**36**
	Job	opportunity to get a job	7

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

4. Module content on the Kindergarten Major

The student-teachers' responses regarding the content of modules are presented in Table 5.30.

Table 5.30 Module content

The content of modules	N	%
Useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children	32	29.6
Not useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children		
Some of them are useful and some need to be reconsidered	76	70.4
Total	108	100.0

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

5. The extent to which student-teachers perceive the content of the modules as useful, and reasons for this

Although all student-teachers responded to the previous question, 24 did not respond to the current question.

Table 5.31 below shows student-teachers' reasons for thinking that the modules were useful for working with children. The student-teachers' reasons were coded into two categories, as shown in Table 5.31. Regarding the first category, one student-teacher made the following positive comment:

> *Each module addresses all aspects of the growth of the child in an integrated manner. The modules contain all knowledge and experiences which are related to pre-school children such as children's characteristics, and ways of dealing/interacting with children and how to attract their attentions.*

Table 5.31 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that the modules are useful

Reasons	N
Modules are comprehensive for all child's learning and development areas	8
Modules develop student's knowledge and experience for child's learning and development	14
No response	10
Total	32

Fourteen student-teachers were within the second category, and examples of their thinking can be seen in the following extracts:

> *Modules give me knowledge that is useful for my teaching practice in specific, and at discipline field in general. Also, they benefit me to understand the children.*
>
> *Modules qualify the student-teacher to be a good teacher, she is able to perform the work diligently and faithfully, and without boredom or confusion.*
>
> *These modules benefit student-teacher for preparing children for future life. They provide knowledge and experience about how play with children is, and how children's learning and development is, and how to prepare and present activities for developing children's abilities.*
>
> *They teach the student-teacher how to deal/interact with children, what are the problems that facing children, and ways to solve these problems, and how to make the child grow up well.*

While 76 student-teachers said in the previous question that some modules were useful and some needed to be reconsidered, fourteen of them did not give their reasons, so 62 student-teachers' reasons are presented in Table 5.32.

Table 5.32 Reasons behind student-teachers' thinking that some modules are useful and some need to be reconsidered

Reasons		N
Some modules are useful	Keeps student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	8 of 62
Some modules need to be reconsidered	Do not keep student-teacher in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice	19 of 62
	Repeated knowledge	36 of 62
	There is no link between practical and theoretical part for some modules	7 of 62
	A lot of activities in some of the modules	
	Many modules are taught	1 of 62
	Teaching style not effective	8 of 62
	There is no focusing on children's chants, how to present stories for children, children's drawings	1 of 62

Note: shaded boxes represent no answer

Eight of the participants considered that the modules kept them in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice. These modules provided knowledge related to

child's learning and development, and how student-teachers deal/interact with children. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *Some modules are very useful because they contain some of the subjects related to child's learning and development. This knowledge is useful for dealing/interacting with children, especially in the teaching practice and in the daily life. I took advantages of these modules through the activities and workshops.*

36 student-teachers said that there was repetition of some modules' content. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *Some modules are repeated in knowledge considerably, which may cause boredom for student-teacher and waste time. And some of modules contain knowledge which is not useful for us as kindergarten teachers in future.*

Regarding theoretical and practical modules, one student-teacher comment was:

> *Some modules contain the theoretical side heavily and neglect the practical side that forms the basis for working with children. The practical modules are more useful for preparing kindergarten teacher. And some modules contain some of the knowledge which is difficult to apply in fact.*

Another student-teacher had a different view:

> *There are many of theoretical modules have been benefited significantly in dealing/addressing some of the positions that we faced in teaching practice such as the 'Social Raising of the Child module and the Problems of Childhood module'.*

When one student-teacher in the fourth year observed that there was a lack of some knowledge in the programme, she gave examples of "*teaching children's chants, presenting stories for children, and working with children's drawings*".

Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

1. Knowledge of children's learning and development

In this section, Table 5.33 presents student-teachers' responses regarding whether they in their programme should have knowledge of children's learning and development.

Table 5.33 Knowledge of children's learning and development

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	child development theories	**35**	**34.7**	**37**	**36.6**	**16**	**15.8**	**11**	**10.9**	**2**	**2.0**
7	pre-school child characteristics	**65**	**64.4**	**33**	**32.7**	**2**	**2.0**	**1**	**1.0**		
8	children's needs and how teachers meet those needs	**69**	**68.3**	**25**	**24.8**	**7**	**6.9**				
9	supporting child's moral, mental, physical growth in a natural environment similar to child's family environment	**64**	**63.4**	**32**	**31.7**	**3**	**3.0**	**2**	**2.0**		
10	supporting children's Islamic religious beliefs in the oneness of God	**73**	**72.3**	**23**	**22.8**	**4**	**4.0**	**1**	**1.0**		
11	play and the importance of play in kindergarten child's learning	**79**	**78.2**	**19**	**18.8**	**3**	**3.0**				
12	pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children	**40**	**39.6**	**38**	**37.6**	**16**	**15.8**	**5**	**5.0**	**2**	**2.0**
13	the methods of child raising	**51**	**50.5**	**35**	**34.7**	**11**	**10.9**	**3**	**3.0**	**1**	**1.0**
14	childhood problems and how to handle educational and behavioural problems	**70**	**69.3**	**26**	**25.7**	**4**	**4.0**	**1**	**1.0**		
15	child protection against dangers	**45**	**44.6**	**45**	**44.6**	**10**	**9.9**			**1**	**1.0**
16	how to interact with children and adults at kindergarten, and parents	**46**	**45.5**	**42**	**41.6**	**10**	**9.9**	**3**	**3.0**		
17	roles and functions of a kindergarten teacher in field experience (teaching context)	**44**	**43.6**	**40**	**39.6**	**14**	**13.9**	**3**	**3.0**		
18	child preparation for transition to primary school life	**41**	**40.6**	**43**	**42.6**	**11**	**10.9**	**5**	**5.0**	**1**	**1.0**
19	aims and content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia	**39**	**38.6**	**35**	**34.7**	**19**	**18.8**	**7**	**6.9**	**1**	**1.0**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

2. Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

The second section indicated student-teachers' opinions as to whether they should be adequately trained to do the following, as shown in Table 5.34.

Table 5.34 Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
20	provide children with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their age	64	59.3	38	35.2	3	2.8	3	2.8		
21	create appropriate activities whether inside or outside the classroom for children's abilities	59	54.6	36	33.3	11	10.2	2	1.9		
22	plan group and individual activities for kindergarten children	52	48.1	45	41.7	9	8.3	1	.9	1	.9
23	plan child-initiated activities, including play	54	50.0	37	34.3	14	13.0	1	.9	2	1.9
24	plan adult-directed activities	38	35.2	52	48.1	16	14.8	1	.9	1	.9
25	design activities fostering intellectual development of kindergarten children	69	63.9	28	25.9	8	7.4	3	2.8		
26	design activities fostering motor/ physical skills of kindergarten children	70	64.8	31	28.7	4	3.7	3	2.8		
27	design activities fostering emotional development of kindergarten children	67	62.0	30	27.8	8	7.4	3	2.8		
28	design activities associated with child's learning of the scientific and mathematical concepts	54	50.0	40	37.0	12	11.1	2	1.9		
29	design activities associated with development of the linguistic skills of kindergarten children	54	50.0	45	41.7	7	6.5	2	1.9		
30	design activities that contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of kindergarten children	60	55.6	33	30.6	13	12.0	2	1.9		
31	design activities to foster the KSA cultural customs and beliefs of kindergarten children	52	48.1	40	37.0	15	13.9	1	.9		
32	design activities to prepare the child for reading and writing	56	51.9	39	36.1	10	9.3	3	2.8		
33	design and produce educational aids appropriate for kindergarten children	65	60.2	33	30.6	7	6.5	3	2.8		
34	design and produce educational games appropriate for kindergarten children	68	63.0	31	28.7	6	5.6	3	2.8		
35	use local materials properly to design educational activities	66	61.1	34	31.5	7	6.5	1	.9		
36	acquire educational qualifications that distinguish them from other stage teachers	59	54.6	39	36.1	7	6.5	3	2.8		
37	design educational context to enable children to learn	62	57.4	41	38.0	4	3.7	1	.9		
38	teach the subject areas of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA	43	39.8	45	41.7	15	13.9	5	4.6		

39	assess children's learning and development across the KSA national curriculum	**36**	**33.3**	**46**	**42.6**	**20**	**18.5**	**6**	**5.6**		
40	manage classrooms effectively	**57**	**52.8**	**41**	**38.0**	**9**	**8.3**	**1**	**.9**		
41	encourage children's imaginative thinking	**67**	**62.0**	**33**	**30.6**	**6**	**5.6**	**2**	**1.9**		
42	design educational unit for kindergarten children	**54**	**50.0**	**32**	**29.6**	**18**	**16.7**	**4**	**3.7**		
43	design and manage the kindergarten programme	**39**	**36.1**	**45**	**41.7**	**17**	**15.7**	**7**	**6.5**		

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box = None

Part three: Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

This part presents student-teachers' perceptions of their professional preparation programme. The responses are presented in Table 5.35 below.

Table 5.35 Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
44	programme adequately covers all academic subject which are relevant to early childhood stage	**33**	**30.6**	**52**	**48.1**	**16**	**14.8**	**5**	**4.6**	**2**	**1.9**
45	programme design is beneficial because it includes theoretical and practical sessions	**37**	**34.3**	**59**	**54.6**	**11**	**10.2**			**1**	**.9**
46	programme gives student-teachers the knowledge and skills to teach pre-school children	**44**	**40.7**	**58**	**53.7**	**3**	**2.8**	**3**	**2.8**		
47	teaching modules in this programme are progressive and well organized	**42**	**38.9**	**46**	**42.6**	**12**	**11.1**	**7**	**6.5**	**1**	**.9**
48	time scale of the programme (8 levels/4 years, consisting of 56 modules) enables student-teachers to be sufficiently prepared for teaching	**49**	**45.4**	**40**	**37.0**	**11**	**10.2**	**7**	**6.5**	**1**	**.9**
49	all educational and the general preparation modules (50 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**36**	**33.3**	**39**	**36.1**	**18**	**16.7**	**11**	**10.2**	**4**	**3.7**
50	all specialized modules (78 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**37**	**34.3**	**42**	**38.9**	**18**	**16.7**	**9**	**8.3**	**2**	**1.9**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree; Shaded box= None

Part four: Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

The responses of student-teachers regarding internal and external constraints affecting the effectiveness of the programme are presented in Table 5.36.

Table 5.36 Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

	Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
51	non-compliance of the student-teacher for studying previous requirements	**40**	**37.0**	**31**	**28.7**	**21**	**19.4**	**10**	**9.3**	**6**	**5.6**
52	number of student-teachers in class is very large	**43**	**39.8**	**24**	**22.2**	**19**	**17.6**	**15**	**13.9**	**7**	**6.5**
53	lack of interest among some student-teachers to work with pre-school children	**41**	**38.0**	**41**	**38.0**	**17**	**15.7**	**6**	**5.6**	**3**	**2.8**
54	learning environment at the college doesn't encourage learning and sound understanding	**29**	**26.9**	**32**	**29.6**	**25**	**23.1**	**18**	**16.7**	**4**	**3.7**
55	the university web doesn't provide adequately the necessary information about the modules	**44**	**40.7**	**30**	**27.8**	**20**	**18.5**	**11**	**10.2**	**3**	**2.8**
56	lack of kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers	**84**	**77.8**	**16**	**14.8**	**3**	**2.8**	**2**	**1.9**	**3**	**2.8**

Note: (5)= Strongly agree; (4)= Agree; (3)= Neutral; (2)= Disagree; (1)= Strongly disagree

Part five: Further comments

Student-teachers were asked to write down any further comments about their professional preparation programme, but only 35 out of 108 participants wrote any comments and suggestions, as follows:

Student-teachers made the following positive comments:

- the programme was interesting (N= 1 of 35)
- the programme was very suitable for the preparation of kindergarten teachers (N= 2 of 35)

Student-teachers made the following negative comments:

- some kindergartens did not give student-teachers the opportunity to operate freely (N= 2 of 35)
- there was no focusing on educational units that were taught in kindergarten curriculum in KSA (N= 1 of 35)
- there were no Saudi lecturers in Kindergarten Major (N= 1 of 35)

- the content of modules was repeated in knowledge (N= 4 of 35)
- the teaching style was not effective (N= 5 of 35)
- the content of modules were very long (N= 1 of 35)

Student-teachers made the following suggestions:

- a kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers is needed (N= 10 of 35)
- adding more intensive knowledge and experiences in the modules' contents (N= 5 of 35)
- student-teachers should not be encumbered with a lot of work (N= 3 of 35)
- increase the number of visits to children at kindergarten to help student-teachers learn more about the children (N= 1 of 35)
- reduce the number of modules, especially educational and the general modules (N = 2 of 35)
- the number of practical sessions should be higher than theoretical sessions (N= 7 of 35)
- the number of theoretical sessions should be higher than practical sessions (N= 1 of 35)
- interview student-teacher before her admission to the Kindergarten Major (N= 1 of 35)
- availability of rooms for activities and private stores for keeping the tools, materials, thus reducing wastage and chaos (N= 4 of 35)
- the tools and materials are provided for the student-teachers free of charge (N= 3 of 35).

It can be observed from the comments made that just under a third of student-teachers (N=10 of 35) suggested having a kindergarten attached to the college. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *In my view, a kindergarten attached to the college will benefit student-teachers more, and will be easier for them to practise what they have learned. Thus their knowledge will consolidate more in their minds. As well as student-teachers will familiarize with the atmosphere of kindergarten, and how to deal/interact with children directly.*

Moreover, it was interesting that two student-teachers asserted that the programme was very suitable for the preparation of kindergarten teachers. One of them added:

> *Through our presence at the kindergarten for the teaching practice, I see that the majority of student-teachers are able to deal with kindergarten children very well, and they have a lot of enthusiasm to benefit the children of all a new thing appropriate for their age.*

Two student-teachers stated that some kindergartens did not give them the opportunity to work freely. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *Some kindergartens do not give student-teacher an opportunity at the teaching practice stage to work freely, but they limit student-teacher's creativity by many constraints.*

One student-teacher asserted that there was no focusing on educational units that were taught in kindergarten curriculum in KSA; her comment was:

> *From my point of view, it is supposed that student-teachers in their kindergarten programme study educational units that are taught in kindergarten curriculum in KSA. ... However, there is no difference between what is taught at the college and what is applied in the field.*

Five student-teachers stated that the teaching style was not effective. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *Some lecturers are not competent to teach kindergarten modules at the college. So, teaching style is not effective in student-teachers' learning.*

Five student-teachers' suggestions about adding more intensive knowledge and experiences to the content of the modules focused on these topics: (a) children's behavioural problems and what methods to use for solving these problems; (b) developing student-teachers' art skills for producing innovative educational aids; (c) how to develop creative thinking in children; (d) children's chants; (e) child psychology; and (f) child protection against dangers. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *We need to add the topics that take care of children's behavioural problems and what methods for solving these problems, and we need intensive practical hours for developing of student-teacher's art skills for producing innovative educational aids for children. In addition, we need more knowledge and experiences about how is developing of creative thinking in children.*

Also, it was noted that 7 out of 35 student-teachers suggested that the number of practical sessions should be increased. One student-teacher's comment was:

> *It is useful increase the number of practical hours rather than theoretical hours, which help the student-teachers as kindergarten teachers to do the job diligently and demand it in all love and sincerity.*

However, just one student-teacher had a negative view about that. She said: "*I find that there are too many practical hours for some of the modules, it is sufficient for practical hours to be one hour instead of two hours*".

5.5 Summary of Questionnaire Findings across the Four Years

5.5.1 Part One in the Questionnaire:

Student-teachers in the first and fourth years scored a high percentage (up 90%) for their interest in working with children, compared with the ones in the second and third years, (see Appendix H, p. 337). It could be argued that student-teachers in the first year, before their enrolment on the programme, were motivated to do this course. During the second and third years, student-teachers were burdened with a lot of university-related work. This work pressure may have had a negative effect on their interest in the course. However, in the fourth year, they were more enthusiastic to work with children. This may be because they started to become familiar with the kindergarten atmosphere and realized that they can put their theoretical knowledge into practice.

Based on the many enthusiastic responses by the participants about their personal reasons for joining this programme, it can be concluded that they felt very positive about their course of study. For example, they emphasized their love of children and believed that this programme would benefit them as mothers in educating their children. Also, it was noted that student-teachers in the first year gave personal reasons a higher priority than academic reasons. In contrast, student-teachers in the second, third and fourth years gave the reasons which referred to the university as the priority after personal reasons (see Appendix H, p. 337). They stated that this was a new programme in university, and it was an interesting programme. This belief was demonstrated along with their belief that there were no other desirable majors for them at university.

Regarding the content of modules that were taught in the programme, the majority of respondents believed that some modules were useful and some needed to be reconsidered. Student-teachers in the fourth year scored a higher percentage in this variable regarding beliefs, compared with the rest of the participants, (see Appendix H, p. 337). A high number of student-teachers asserted that there was repetition of some content in the modules, which in turn may lead to boredom in the educational process and lack of interest. Furthermore, they claimed that some of content did not keep them

in touch with the realities of life and teaching practice. Moreover, they stated that there was no link between theory and practice in some modules.

5.5.2 Parts Two, Three and Four in the Questionnaire:

In the following section, the main findings of the mean ranks in three parts of student-teachers' questionnaire (parts two, three and four) will be summarised to highlight the important column across the years (see Appendix H, p. 337-344). It is worth mentioning that in the last column of the tables, the researcher carried out this statistical exercise but that the results did not have much use or relevance. This was because they mask the nuances of the data in each of the four years. The year by year data show more clearly where the main changes in emphasis and importance lie.

Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

Some interesting results and differences among groups emerged in relation to what knowledge about children's learning and development student-teachers believed to be important for them to have. Examples of these follow.

The rankings indicated a lower mean rating of importance given by whole groups of student-teachers to child development theories. However, student-teachers in the fourth year considered child development theories as more important than student-teachers who were in the third year.

Student-teachers in the first year stressed the importance of children's needs and how teachers should meet those needs. However, by the fourth year the student-teachers put more emphasis on children's characteristics. This means that student-teachers in the fourth year understood that it was very important for them to know children's characteristics in the beginning, and then they can meet children's needs. This was because all activities in pre-school education should be based on children's characteristics and needs.

All student-teachers were from an Islamic background and, as described in Chapter 2, educational curricula in KSA concentrates on Islamic religious beliefs. This was

confirmed in the second major objective for pre-school education in KSA. It was intended through the curriculum of pre-school education that children will build a positive relationship with God (Allah) and with others (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). Therefore, not surprisingly, supporting children's Islamic religious beliefs in the oneness of God received a notably high mean importance ranking, which emphasises that the Islamic religion is a major factor in Saudi culture which influences all areas of life for Saudi citizens, and is integral to children's home and pre-school cultures. However, it was noted that student-teachers in the first year assigned a higher importance to this variable, compared with the rest of the participants.

The second, third and fourth study year student-teachers ranked play and the importance of play in children's learning first (on Likert scale), while student-teachers in the first year ranked it third in importance. It was noted that student-teachers in the fourth year were indicating the importance of play was higher than those in other groups, which emphasises the impact of programme content on student-teachers' beliefs, knowledge and understanding. This is consistent with the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia which adopts "the play-based, discovery-oriented approach to learning … and the child-centred approach in its intense form" (Khomais, 2007, p. 35). The pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children, and the methods of raising a child were considered by student-teachers in the fourth year to be very important aspects of professional knowledge in teacher training, compared with the rest of the participants in the study.

A higher mean rating for student-teachers in the first year, compared with others, indicated the importance of child protection against dangers. However, by the fourth year the student-teachers assigned higher importance to childhood problems and how to handle educational and behavioural problems. This reflects the ninth objective of pre-school education in KSA.

On the other hand, there were differences in mean ranks of importance between student-teachers' beliefs which were related to pedagogical content and kindergarten curriculum. Examples of these differences follow.

It was claimed that the learning styles of young children are different from the learning styles of older children (Wortham, 1994). Student-teachers in the first year indicated the importance of child-initiated activities more than student-teachers who were in the other years. However, by the fourth year the student-teachers were expressing the importance of adult-directed activities. This result reflects contemporary pedagogical approaches, which recommend that young children under seven need opportunities to manage their own learning through their choices of child-initiated activities, as well as participating in adult-directed activities, in order to create a range of contexts to enhance motivation and support effective learning (Wood, 2009).

Student-teachers in the second year indicated the importance of designing activities promoting the emotional development of children more than student-teachers in other years, whereas student-teachers in the fourth year gave more importance to designing activities fostering dynamic/physical skills of children. Student-teachers in the second year indicated the importance of designing activities associated with the development of the linguistic skills of kindergarten children, since development of children's linguistic skills "affects the child's willingness to learn the Arabic Alphabet and to read the holy book ("*Qur'an*") but is matched to the child's existing competencies" (Gahwaji, 2005, p. 147).

It was noted that student-teachers in the first and second year indicated the importance of designing activities that contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of children more than those in the third and fourth year. Since these concepts in Saudi Arabia emanate from the Islamic faith, it was confirmed in one of the objectives of pre-school education (the third objective). In this respect, it was declared in the teacher's manual that telling interesting religious stories about the lives of some prophets and about prophet Muhammad, is commensurate with the interest of children in pre-school stage to support their learning process, and emphasizes the moral concepts that emerge from the values of religion (Samadi and Marwa, 2006). In addition, student-teachers in the first year indicated a higher mean rating of importance on designing activities to foster the KSA cultural customs and beliefs of children. In contemporary society, Saudi children are widely exposed to other cultures through the media and the use of technology in their daily life, especially the use of

laptops and the internet with the absence of parental guidance. Therefore, it may be seen as important to enculturate young children into KSA customs and beliefs.

All these student-teachers are Saudi and if they get a job in KSA as a teacher, they will teach the kindergarten curriculum in KSA. Student-teachers in the fourth year indicated a higher mean rating of importance, more than student-teachers in the third year about whether they should be trained to teach the subject areas of kindergarten curriculum in KSA. Moreover, student-teachers in the first year indicated the importance of being adequately trained to manage the classroom effectively. However, by the fourth year, student-teachers were assigning greater importance to the designing of the educational context to enable children to learn.

Part three: perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

Some interesting results of student-teachers' perceptions of their programme are presented.

A lower mean of agreement for student-teachers in the third year, compared with those in the first year, showed that the programme covered all academic subjects which were relevant to early childhood. Whereas, a higher mean of agreement for student-teachers in the fourth year, higher than that for student-teachers in the first year, indicated that the programme gave them the knowledge and skills to teach children, which emphasizes that their studies confirmed for them that the programme was the correct choice. In addition, a high mean of agreement for student-teachers in the fourth year, compared with others groups, suggested that the time scale of the programme enables them to be sufficiently prepared for teaching, and the programme design was beneficial because it included theoretical and practical elements.

A lower mean of agreement shown for student-teachers in the third and fourth years, compared with the student-teachers in the first and second years, demonstrated that teaching of the modules in the programme was progressive and well organized. Moreover, a lower mean of agreement for student-teachers in the fourth year, compared with the student-teachers in the first year, showed that all educational and

general preparation modules, as well as all specialized modules, were useful for the development of their knowledge.

Part four: perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

In this section, some interesting results were summarized concerning the student-teachers' beliefs about the perceived constraints that affect the effectiveness of the kindergarten programme.

A higher mean of significance for responses from student-teachers in the third year, compared with the other groups, demonstrated that they ranked as a constraint the non-compliance of the student-teacher for studying previous requirements. In addition, those student-teachers who were in the third year saw the very high number of student-teachers in class as a significant constraint which affected their learning and teaching. However, by the fourth year the student-teachers saw lack of interest among some student-teachers to work with children as a significant constraint.

A higher mean of significance shown for student-teachers in the fourth year, compared with the other years, indicated that they ranked the learning environment at the college, which did not encourage learning, as a serious constraint. Similarly, a higher mean of significance for student-teachers in the third year, compared with others, indicated that the university web did not provide adequately the necessary information about the modules.

Not surprisingly, the lack of a kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers received a notably high mean ranking by all student-teachers. They ranked it first in importance as a constraint affecting their professional preparation, which emphasises the important role of an early start to their teaching practice.

5.5.3 Part Five in the Questionnaire:

The majority of student-teachers who wrote their comments in this part, for all four years, suggested creating a kindergarten attached to the college for their training. Also, it was noted that the majority of student-teachers in the second and third year stated that the knowledge content of some modules was repeated. Furthermore, they claimed

that teaching style was not effective, which was later also asserted by fourth year student teachers. In addition, student-teachers in the third year suggested that they should not be overloaded with a lot of work. Both student-teachers in the third and fourth year suggested that there should be more practical learning periods rather than theoretical ones. However, the student-teachers in the fourth year suggested adding more intensive knowledge and experiences to the contents of the modules.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented the analysis of the student-teacher questionnaire for each study year separately, followed by a summary of the findings from the questionnaire across the four years. This helped the researcher to gain a general idea about student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs about their professional preparation programme, which was like an introduction for further in-depth investigation through interviews to understand how their knowledge was structured, how their beliefs developed over the four-year programme, and how the programme content prepared them to become kindergarten teachers. The following five chapters will present the findings and analysis of student-teacher interviews separately for each study year. The responses of the participants will be described and interpreted in detail, followed by a summary of the findings for each study year.

Chapter Six: Analysis of Student-teacher Interviews in the First Study Year

Introduction

This chapter and the next four chapters present the analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews with 32 Saudi student-teachers who were studying on the four-year programme, which included the educational, general preparation and specialized modules in EC. The researcher will focus on the student-teachers' knowledge gained from the specialized modules in EC. A copy of the kindergarten programme modules appears in Appendix A (p. 308). The analysis will show student-teachers' beliefs about their professional preparation programme, and their views on the extent to which the programme content prepared them to become kindergarten teachers. The knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers regarding teaching and learning, and how their knowledge and beliefs developed over the four-year programme will be presented. A full description of the processes of interviews and data analysis has been provided in Chapter Four.

The semi-structured interview questions were grouped into five parts as follows: general information; kindergarten programme content; teaching styles and their effectiveness; the teaching/learning environment; and influences on the educational process. A copy of the interview questions appears in Appendix D (p. 323).

Analysis of Student-teacher Interviews in the First Study Year

Part One: General Information

All eight participants in the first study year (A_1, B_1, C_1, D_1, E_1, F_1, G_1, H_1) stated that they enjoyed Kindergarten Major and they had entered this programme by their own choice and without any influence from others. Their enjoyment of the programme increased once they had completed the first few modules. As one participant comments:

> *I love to interact with children, I chose this major and I am convinced. Now my love has grown up.* B_1

The participants believed that this programme kept them in touch with the realities of life. They believed that it would not just benefit them as teachers in teaching children

at kindergarten, but it would help them as mothers in raising and educating their children at home. Comments illustrating this point include the following:

> *I felt that this major is the best in the university and it is interesting. It is the only major which benefit me in my daily life and in my children education.* F_1

> *Kindergarten Major is useful for my social life in the future. The more I have been introduced to the knowledge of this major, the more I become interested.* D_1

> *I chose the major that I wanted. In the beginning, I felt that this major was very difficult but now I love it much more because most of knowledge that I have learnt will be useful for me as a mother and a teacher.* E_1

The university policy followed in the admission of the student-teachers indicated that only those student-teachers who achieved more than 90% in the secondary school Grade Point Average (GPA) were accepted onto the kindergarten programme. There were two possible reasons for this: firstly, the university aimed to produce highly qualified kindergarten teachers; and, secondly, places were limited but the number of applications was high. In the following comment one student-teacher mentioned that this policy was one of the reasons for joining this programme:

> *I have been accepted in this major due to my high GPA in my secondary school, according to the university admission's criteria... I joined this major because that what I really wanted for my future life. In the other side, my family is always asking me about my study and what I learned.* C_1

It seems that student-teachers' homes, and their cultural and educational background influenced their beliefs. They came to the programme with beliefs from their life experiences, their values, and their education, and they carried those beliefs with them into how they learnt to teach. Also, it was clear that the student-teachers' beliefs were closely linked with their interest and motivation: they wanted to be good mothers and good teachers, so they were very motivated by their interest to learn about child learning and development.

Part Two: Programme Content (Subject Matter and Pedagogical Strategies)

All participants believed that the content of the modules that they had completed was useful and they believed that these modules served as a starting point for their preparation to become kindergarten teachers. Although all student-teachers in the first study year believed that their knowledge was changing and developing, they felt that

they still needed more knowledge to teach children. Sample comments include the following:

> *The modules benefit me in the future as a mother and as a teacher. They prepare me to be a kindergarten teacher.* A_1

> *My knowledge is developing from lecture to lecture, but I still need more knowledge to interact with children.* B_1

> *Modules are useful and related to each other. Interestingly my knowledge is changing and increasing. However, I need to learn more in order to be a kindergarten teacher. I believe the knowledge I have now are still basic and simple.* D_1

It seems that, in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers, student-teachers did not just see themselves as teachers but also as mothers. Moreover, these student-teachers were becoming aware of the interaction between their beliefs and the theories that they were encountering in the modules. They were also aware of their increasing knowledge, and how it was developing and changing over time. As their knowledge developed, they became more aware of what they did not know, and what they needed to know to move forward (moving from basic and simple knowledge, to more complex and coherently organised knowledge).

At the end of the first year, all eight participants expected to know more about ways of interacting with children. In addition, six participants hoped to gain knowledge about childhood problems, handling educational and behavioural issues, and planning children's activities. Five of them also expected input on children's characteristics and needs, with four participants hoping for knowledge about understanding the child and how to interpret his/her behaviour. Just one of them expected input on pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children, and the aims of the kindergarten curriculum in the KSA. The following are representative comments:

> *I expect to know about child's psychology and how to interpret his/her behaviour. I need to learn about young children's pedagogical strategies. Unfortunately, I do not have the ability to prepare entire activity for children.* B_1

> *I am expected to know about the characteristics of the child and his/her needs, childhood problems, how to interact with children, and how to design activities that help children to develop their skills and concepts.* C_1

These student-teachers believed that they needed to have specialist knowledge in order to begin teaching practice. Different student-teachers emphasised various kinds of professional knowledge and what was important to them. This may be due to their prior knowledge, life experiences, life beliefs, and values regarding teaching and learning.

The comments of the participants showed that they have acquired different kinds of knowledge from different modules. For example, all eight participants pointed out that they had covered the content of a module called 'Entrance to Kindergarten'. According to the participants, the module covered a range of topics, and each of the participants highlighted aspects that were important in their personal learning experience. For example, five participants believed that they had learnt about child development theories, with C_1 claiming that, '*I have learned knowledge about child development theories, which are by ten pioneers in child education. For example, Piaget and his cognitive theory',* whereas all eight participants believed that they had a good understanding of the educational context in the kindergarten, as A_1 states in the following extract:

> *I have learnt about the context of kindergarten, and how to prepare the learning environment for children, as for instance, how to organize their outside and inside classroom area, and what we should place in the educational corners. In this module we visited just one kindergarten once. This visit was to assess the kindergarten in terms of everything such as classrooms including the corners… and so on.*

Another participant (C_1) believed that the student-teachers knew the nature of activities carried out by kindergarten children in the corners of the classroom: she said, '*I have been introduced to the context of the kindergarten, and what kinds of activities children do in their education corners*'.

More than half of the participants (6 student-teachers) believed that one visit to kindergarten was not enough to develop their knowledge, and they needed more visits during their first study year. One student-teacher (B_1) stated: '*it will be helpful, if we had the opportunities to visit the kindergarten more often*'.

The participants were aware of the specialist nature of their professional preparation programme. They believed that their specialised knowledge about children's

characteristics, the daily programme at kindergarten, the kindergarten teacher's educational qualifications, and the educational units in the kindergarten curriculum in the KSA had been introduced at a basic level, but with no depth. Moreover, it seemed that these student-teachers understood how training to be a kindergarten teacher was different from training to be another kind of teacher. One participant stated:

> *Simply my knowledge about, how kindergarten teachers should be is not enough. I have learnt little about kindergarten's daily programme through my visit, and my lecturer indirectly.* D_1

Also, these student-teachers obtained knowledge in child psychology and games during the module 'Psychology of Games'. For example, three participants believed that they had learnt about child psychology, as C_1 said: '*the module of 'Psychology of Games' was very useful, I studied the child's psychology, and how I interact with children because of their individual differences'.* On the other hand, four participants believed that they knew about play, as claimed by A_1: *'so far I have background knowledge about theories of playing and how they are important for children's learning. Also, I am now familiar with the kinds of playing such as imaginative play'.* C_1 added, '*I studied the factors affecting the play such as intelligence'.*

Through the module entitled 'The Artistic Education of the Kindergarten Child', the participants believed that they had acquired different knowledge. Three participants believed that they had gained some abilities to work creatively with their hands, as illustrated in the following comment from A_1: '*we have taught handicrafts skills, and how to design appropriate educational games for children by using local materials'.* Four participants believed that they had learnt about creative activities, such as drawing and making models, as illustrated by B_1:

> *I have learned about children's drawings …, and how children express themselves in drawing. Also, I learned about modelling by using dough and how to use that for children's learning and development'.*

Furthermore, all eight participants pointed out that they had covered the content of a module on 'Child Health and Nutrition'. According to the comments, three participants believed that they knew about nutrition in pregnancy: C_1 claimed, '*I have been taught about nutrition in pregnancy, and breastfeeding and its benefits'.* Similarly, four participants believed that they knew about a child's health and nutrition, as A_1 stated in the following quotation:

> *In Child Health and Nutrition' module, I have learnt about factors affecting children's nutrition, how to look after a child's health and nutrition, and how to prepare a meal for children aged from 2-7 years*

Five participants believed that they were able to teach children sanitary habits, as claimed by $B_{1:}$ *'I have learned knowledge about children's diseases, and knowledge about how to teach children sanitary habits'*.

The last specialist module on the list for the first study year was called 'Introduction to Special Education'. All participants had the same belief that they had a basic level of knowledge about children who have different kinds of disability. However, there was a doubt raised by student-teacher F_1:

> *We have taken basic knowledge about children with special needs, why do we need to learn about disabled children? That should be taught for students who are majored in special needs, but not for us*

Student-teacher F_1 may be unaware of the national strategy for the inclusion of children with Special Needs (SN) in regular kindergartens at state-level. Or, as a student-teacher in the first study year, she may not see the importance of the module in her professional preparation as a kindergarten teacher. It could also be that she had the belief that children with SN live in isolation from society, with no opportunities for rehabilitation and training. Therefore, if student-teachers had no experience as pupils of an inclusive model of education, they may not understand that the practice of inclusion is now more common in kindergarten and they may not see the relevance of a high level of knowledge about Special Education Needs (SEN). However, there are different levels of severity of SEN and student-teachers will need specialist knowledge and experience in a range of strategies for working with children with SN, such as those with dyslexia, poor hearing, and sight impairment.

Table 6.1 provides a summary of the programme content in the first study year from the student-teachers' perspectives (looking at the knowledge they had gained from the specialist modules).

Table 6.1 The programme content in the first year

Specialist modules (Theoretical/Practical)	The important areas of the programme content (Student-teachers' knowledge/1st year)
Entrance to Kindergarten	- child development theories (the ten pioneers in child education) - the educational context in the kg - what children apply in the corners
Psychology of Games	- child psychology - theories of play and how play is important for children's learning - the factors affecting the play
The Artistic Education for the Kindergarten Child	- some abilities to work creatively with the hands - design appropriate educational games - drawing and making models
Child Health and Nutrition	- factors affecting children's nutrition - how to look after a child's health and nutrition - how to prepare a meal for children - children sanitary habits - children's diseases
Introduction to Special Education	- basic level of knowledge about children who have different kinds of disability

Overall, student-teachers in their learning in all these modules learnt about different areas of professional knowledge, but it seems that their knowledge was fragmented and they were not sure how to bring these areas together. They believed that they had developed their knowledge about child development theories, the educational context in kindergartens, child psychology, play, some objects created by hand or '*craft knowledge*', child health and nutrition, and how to teach children sanitary habits. However, there were differences in student-teachers' beliefs and orientations regarding the modules, as they seemed to be picking up different aspects of knowledge. This may have been due to their prior knowledge and experience, to their motivation and engagement in the modules, to teaching styles used in the teaching modules, and their general patterns of interest in different areas. Moreover, there may also have been an issue of experience and confidence, for example, in accessing library materials to support their studies, and in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

On the other hand, regarding the educational and general preparation modules, there were two dominant beliefs among the participants. One was that all modules were useful and important, as F_1 stated: '*they are useful and important because it is nice that student-teacher be educated and informative on everything in general, not just in her major'*. Student-teacher F_1 appeared to contradict herself: although she believed that all the modules were useful, and the student-teacher should know everything, not just the knowledge of her major, she believed that there was no need to know about children with SN. Thus, this was another indication of a level of confusion in the first year, when student-teachers hold contradictory beliefs at the same time. This may have been because the student-teachers were themselves educated at a time when children with SEN were not integrated into mainstream schools. So, this may have been outside their experience, which partly explains why it may have been an area of concern for them. This means that student-teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in the first year were actually relatively unstable.

The other belief was related to the view that some of the educational and general preparation modules were very useful and, it seemed from the participants' comments, that there was a need for modules related to social changes. A_1 believed that *'some of them are very useful for development of student-teachers' knowledge and these modules consider as foundations and principles for student-teachers' study'*. Moreover, A_1 explained:

> *In the modules of administration, I learn how to manage my time, how to deal with the kindergarten director, and how to communicate with others. According to Islamic culture modules, it is important that we support teaching religion to children, as it is noticeable now some people do not know much about our religion. Also, we need more than one module for English subject to help reading English books as references.*

These student-teachers knew how their knowledge needed to develop into a coherent whole, by connecting areas of learning within the module, and reflecting on what was happening in the wider society (student-teachers needed to maintain a focus on religion, and they needed more English).

Despite what participants felt about the number of visits to kindergartens to see the context in which children learn and develop, they seemed to be satisfied with the lessons in their time table: F_1 claims, '*theoretical (classroom learning) and practical*

(workshops) hours are appropriate and enough, I feel our practical assignments' time table is convenient to do the practical application of the theoretical content'. However, just one student-teacher (B_1) said *'practical hours of the module for 'The Artistic Education for the kindergarten child' are not enough. It is compulsory for us to complete our assignment at home. We would rather to finish it in the classroom'*. Although it seems that this student-teacher (B_1) believed that she was gaining a good understanding of the theoretical and practical content of modules, as will be shown later, she wanted more than two hours a week for this module to achieve all the practical applications of the theoretical content of the lecture. Perhaps this student-teacher (B_1) was not as committed to the programme as some of the other student-teachers. It is asserted that there are individual differences among learners in learning and application (Spiro and Myers, 1984). Therefore, for student-teachers to show commitment in their professional preparation they should be aware that there are practical tasks related to the theoretical content of the lecture that could be conducted outside the lecture to develop their own ability to teach.

The student-teachers illustrated the extent to which they were able to make connections between theoretical content and practical application. For example,

> *It was very important to visit the kindergarten, as practical side is important as well as theoretical. I have now the ability to … organize the educational corners in the classroom, we should take into account the lighting and ventilation within the classrooms, also theatre in the kindergarten is very important for children's learning and development, where they engaged in various activities.* D_1

These student-teachers believed that they had an understanding of the kindergarten context and their role as teachers in preparing this context inside the classroom as a form of their professional preparation. They believed also that they were able to value the kindergarten and its facilities, to design educational games appropriate for kindergarten children by using local materials, and to help children apply some finer motor skills. For example,

> *In 'Psychology of Games' module, the lecturer asked student-teachers to design games that develop children's moral, mental, physical growth. We chose and designed the games, and we took into account what were the objectives of the game and how to present them for children.* C_1

> *We made different types of dough for children to use, and created objects… I designed games, which develop child's growth aspects. For*

> *example, ordering, balls, and balloons. The aim was to develop child's ability on movement, and develop the child's fine muscles, also the child can distinguish colors. But I do not have the ability to prepare a completely activity.* B_1

These student-teachers demonstrated how they were building their content knowledge about learning in EC, and they were beginning to develop their unique 'teacher identity'. The student-teacher A_1 reflected her identity as a teacher; she was saying what she had learned and what she had to do as a teacher. She was making the journey from the module content to seeing herself in the classroom, and she saw herself as a person who was going to give guidance and encouragement. She would encourage the children to express themselves through their drawing:

> *If the page is blank and there is a small drawing, this means that the child likes isolation or has a fear to exercise his/her activities freely. If the child filled the page, this means that he/she is open to the outside world. I must give the children the opportunities to express themselves through their drawings, and the role of the teacher is guidance and encouragement.*

All participants believed that, as C_1 stated, '*the child learns through play, playing is very important approach for children to help them to gain knowledge and skills. In the beginning, children learn from playing by unintentional manner, but after that, playing becomes more organized to help them acquire knowledge and skills'*. One student-teacher (B_1) believed that '*the child could learn through the drawings, when the teacher offers these drawings to attract his/her attention. And children like to learn from themselves, they did not like to be forced to learn'*. Another student-teacher (E_1) believed that '*some children learn through dialogue and debate or through role-playing'*. However, when participants were asked about pedagogical strategies, they showed that they have no knowledge of them. For example, as B_1 stated, *'I want knowledge about pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children, I do not have knowledge about that'*. This may reflect the fact that the participants were not able yet to relate their content knowledge to procedural and conceptual knowledge.

Part Three: Teaching Styles at the University and their Effectiveness

The comments of the participants revealed that there were different methods and strategies used in the teaching modules. All the participants pointed out that the delivery of a lecture (delivering/lecturing) was the predominant method, but that there

was also dialogue and discussion of the subject with the whole class, and that there was individual work and sometimes group work. However, one lecturer adopted the approach of reading from a book during the lecture, as A_1 stated: '*there is just one lecturer reads from a book during the lecture, and this teaching style is boring and not effective in our learning'.*

The participants believed that the most effective teaching style in student-teachers' learning was the dialogue and discussion style, whether in the form of whole class discussion or in groups organised in the lectures. However, the participants asserted that the discussion group style was used relatively rarely: as B_1 stated, 'a *discussion group was effective for my learning because we used to exchange our knowledge with each other. Unfortunately we did not have enough group discussion'.* Another student-teacher *(*A_1) believed that *'dialogue and discussion is the effective style in my learning, because I receive more than opinion (pros and cons) from students'.* And C_1 added, *'I will benefit and others also benefit, where we know the point of views of each other'.*

One participant (C_1) believed that individual work was her best learning and teaching strategy: she said '*I do not like to work with groups outside the classroom … I prefer individual work because I work everything by myself and this benefits me more'.* It seemed that this student-teacher (C_1) did not realize the importance of team work in teaching. This may be related to the fact that she was in the first year of her studies, and that at the end of the programme this student-teacher may realize that teachers need to co-operate with each other and not always work individually. However, the majority of the participants (7 student-teachers) believed that group work was useful. This may be beneficial in the future, as experience of group and teamwork will have prepared them better for interacting with administrators, teachers, parents, and so on, in their practical experience (teaching context).

Part Four: The Teaching/Learning Environment at the University

When asked about which characteristics of their professional preparation they believed to be most useful, the participants focused on the taught modules and lecturers' experiences. For example,

> *Modules will benefit me much, they contain useful knowledge. So far, I feel that the modules are good and the content of modules does not need any extra content.* C_1
>
> *One of the positive aspects of my professional preparation is acquiring experiences of lecturers. They provide their experiences for student-teachers to be kindergarten teachers.* D_1

On the other hand, most of the participants (5 student-teachers) believed that they had not found any elements that were not so useful in their professional preparation; as D_1 believed, *'so far, I did not feel that there is something negative that impacts on my learning'*. However, one participant (F_1) emphasized the important role of practical application (workshops) in the modules of the student-teacher professional preparation programme: '*the more we had workshops the more we become qualified'*. A_1 added: '*we need to practise the activities on children, whether we bring them to university or we do visits to kindergarten'*.

The progression in the programme structure was coherent with eight levels and all modules in these levels were compulsory. In addition, the modules in these levels had to be taken sequentially. However, there were some cases of student-teachers who, for some reason, had not been able to register for all of the accredited hours which were required for a specific level. In one case, the GPA of a student-teacher was low and she was not allowed to take all the modules (accredited hours) of the level. Also, the registration system for modules on the WebCT was another problem. As a result, some student-teachers deferred some modules to study with other modules at subsequent levels. B_1 believed, '*my problem that I am studying modules from different levels, this is very difficult for me'*.

Student-teacher A_1 stated that, '*during the registration for the modules, I had difficulties to find the proper modules for my study level because, as most of the sections usually get full and closed early. According to this problem my graduation will be delayed'*. So, student-teachers believed that this was a negative aspect of their professional preparation. Although it seemed that student-teachers experienced discontinuity in the sequence of their modules and in the coherent development of their knowledge, it was unfair in this case to criticize the structure of the programme. One student-teacher (A_1) provided a representative comment: '*the distribution of the modules for each level/term is good, and it helps us to be well prepared for teaching'*.

Thus, for the student-teachers to develop their own progression in a coherent way and to make progress in their professional preparation to teach, they needed to be committed to the programme structure.

Part Five: Influences on the Educational Process

All the participants believed that the content of the modules was the main factor in changing their knowledge and beliefs. However, three of them also believed that reading books and research, and responding to lecturers' further suggestions were change factors. One sample quote is the following:

> *Modules, reading books, and the research that I conducted were developed my knowledge and changed my beliefs*. C_1

> *Factors that change my knowledge were mainly programme modules and research, it helped me much. In addition, the lecturer's follow-up suggestions.* A_1

It seemed that these two student-teachers had been more able to develop their own learning with regard to teaching, in that they stated the extent to which their reading, researching and the subsequent support provided by lecturers had been useful in their professional preparation.

Although the internet and technology are used widely in the KSA in modern society and in higher education, unfortunately, the comments of the participants showed that student-teachers did not use the university's WebCT, except when registering for the modules at the beginning of term and getting their results at the end of the term. Consequently, they were dependent on lecturers to provide the necessary information about the modules, as B_1 stated:

> *I do not use the university's WebCT, I use it for registration and get my module results. I get module information from my lecturers. In the first lecture, the lecturer gives us all the necessary information about the module, the references we need to use, and what is the grading scale for the module*

However, just one participant (A_1) claimed that '*there are icons on the university's WebCT, but some of them are not active to use'*. Moreover, all of the participants except one (A_1) did not use technology for finding books in the university library; C_1 commented as follows: '*the books are available in the university library, I did not use the technology for searching for books in the library through the library's computers or the university's WebCT, and I never thought about using it'*. Another student-

teacher (D_1) stated: '*I am visiting the library many times to get references for my research. The books and computers are available in the library, but I have never used the computer to search for books. However, this depends on student whether to use them for their research'.* A_1 added, '*the books I need for my major, are not allowed to be checked out the library. Actually books are available, but the service is not convenient'*

It seems that most of these student-teachers did not understand sufficiently how to use the technology to search for study materials and did not see the use of the library facilities as a necessity.

Although four participants claimed that they visited the university library and they believed there were study materials available at the university library to support their learning around their major, three participants claimed that they did not visit the university library at all. As F_1 stated, '*I never visited the university library, I feel I do not need it. However, I might need it in some other times'.* These student-teachers did their personal study from course materials and the books which were selected by lecturers in order to pass the exams; and they did the assignments by using Google network or scientific forums on the network, rather than by using the university's WebCT as a formal reference. Student-teachers took this action despite the fact that all Saudi university libraries were accessible and free for all students.

The student-teachers were also asked if there were any difficulties/issues which could impact on their learning/teaching; all the participants seemed to be satisfied. As A_1 stated, *'so far, I did not face any difficulties and issues during my study in this Major'.* Five participants said that they did not have any suggestions that could benefit their professional preparation, as C_1 states: '*I do not have any suggestions or comments in this stage because I am a new student-teacher in the first study year, I have just joined this Kindergarten Major'.* Nevertheless, student-teachers A_1, E_1 and F_1 put forward some suggestions: E_1 stated, '*I hope that practical hours are more than theoretical hours, they help us to understand more*'; student-teacher A_1 commented that '*we need more rooms for the workshops activities';* and F_1 *suggested: 'increasing the number of visits to kindergarten'.*

Summary of the Chapter

The findings in this chapter, based on the interview responses of the participants in the first study year, are summarized in three figures (see Appendix I, p. 345). They show the interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge, a concept map of key conceptual areas for data analysis in the first study year, and the development of student-teachers' knowledge of teaching. This leads now into the second analysis chapter of student-teachers in their second study year.

Chapter Seven: Analysis of Student-teacher Interviews in the Second Study Year

Part One: General Information

All student-teachers in the second study year (A_2, B_2, C_2, D_2, E_2, F_2, G_2, H_2) stated that their enjoyment of the programme increased significantly because they learnt many things about children. They claimed that they love to interact with children, and they believed that this programme would benefit them later in their family life. They believed that they would prepare children for the future, and that they were different from other stage teachers. As one participant commented:

> *To this day I feel a strong desire for this major as it is we teachers who will be laying the foundations for the development of children, they themselves being the foundations of our society, and we prepare them for our nation as a whole. Because of this, it is my opinion that potential candidates for this major should be scrutinised and only allowed in upon successful completion of a personal interview to ascertain their suitability.* G_2

Although all eight participants at this time were convinced that they had made their own decision to enter this programme, two student-teachers (F_2, G_2) commented on outside influences. One of them had a sister who was studying this major, and she (G_2) felt that the taught modules were useful. Similarly, student-teacher F_2 illustrated that her friends were behind her decision:

> *My friends encouraged me to major in kindergarten education yet I was hesitant in pursuing such a course of study, or even a special education major. However, I spoke to other students who have pursued kindergarten and special education majors before I decided that a Kindergarten Major would be best for me. After two years of study, I can now say that I have learnt many wonderful and satisfying things from it. I now feel that I have learnt much about children and how to effectively deal with them.* F_2

Moreover, it seems that society is considered an essential element in influencing the student-teachers' choice to join this programme. As one participant commented:

> *Trends within the child education sector and societal interest in the matter has caused for programmes for the training of kindergarten teachers to be initiated as well as newly founded state owned kindergartens to be developed. This leads us to predict that this sector will have a bright future in terms of employment.* B_2

Another reason for joining this programme was the university admission system, as H_2 explained:

> *I did not choose my major; rather my university selected it for me. My first option was to study for a special education major or, as a secondary option,*

> *for a Kindergarten Major as my average grade was 96%. However, things did not go to plan and I thank God that they didn't, as I'm very pleased that I was entered for this major instead of my first choice. The reason behind my change of heart was because from the first day I began study the various disciplines involved, I felt that it was easy and also had practical aspects. I enjoy the practical aspects, as well as the work and the research involved. I found all that I had hoped for in my Kindergarten Major.* H_2

It seemed that, in the professional programme of kindergarten teachers, student-teachers saw themselves as responsible for preparing a strong generation which would be able to benefit society in terms of national and global changes. Also, it was noted that these student-teachers understood how they were different from other stage teachers in terms of qualifications, so they were developing a distinct professional identity. Moreover, it was clear from participants' comments that new student-teachers might have been influenced by the positive beliefs of past students about the content of their programme. It is possible that new student-teachers joined their programme because they believed that previous student-teachers were more aware of the benefits of being kindergarten teachers.

Part Two: Programme Content (Subject Matter and Pedagogical Strategies)

All participants believed that the content of modules that they had completed was useful as preparation for working with pre-school children. And C_2 added, '*not just that, but I feel that these modules prepare me to interact accurately with children who are around me*'. They believed that these modules were important, especially in terms of progression to other modules. However, four of them (A_2, B_2, E_2, G_2) claimed that there was repetition of some module content. B_2 claimed: '*although there is repetition of some content, I feel that these modules useful and interesting*', while F_2 said: '*there is some repetition and overlap in some of the content, such as 'attributes of a teacher'. However, I do not feel boredom as there is usually additional information*'. Other student-teachers (E_2, H_2, D_2) believed that there was some redundant knowledge, as D_2 stated: '*for example, 'child Health and Nutrition' module, talks a lot for children's diseases*'. Also, as H_2 described:

> *Although we studied about each scientist of the kindergarten stage in other modules, but in 'Curriculum of the Kindergarten' module were redundant. They were about 20 scientists, and we covered them and their theories in three lectures. Most our exam was about these theories. We were depended on memorizing, and we forced to memorize them. However, I knew each scientist and what they did. I feel that this thing is necessary to know it.*

Despite her reservations about learning this material, this participant (H_2) saw that it was important to know about these scientists. It seemed that student-teachers struggled because they had to memorize the content of the module for the assessment of their knowledge during the examinations. They may have seen that they needed to repeat precisely the knowledge from the course materials in the exam paper. This reflects the student-teachers' learning style which was influenced by the learning style at the primary school stage where teachers teach pupils to learn by listening and memorizing what they learnt. Therefore, these student-teachers believed that some elements in the programme needed to be reconsidered. This was supported by the following claim by (E_2): '*through my knowing of academics interest to kindergarten stage, my interest in this major has increased'* and C_2 asserted: '*knowing of scientists' theories is very important to me as a kindergarten teacher*'.

All student-teachers in the second study year believed that their knowledge was developing and improving. Although these participants felt during the first interview that they still needed more knowledge and practice, and they were not ready to teach children in kindergarten, by the second interview it seemed that they were more confident about their abilities to teach and they were more enthusiastic to learn more about teaching children. Sample comments included the following:

> *I feel as if I've learnt much about children and my foundational knowledge continues to increase, however, I'm far from knowing all there is to know... I entered this major without any prior knowledge on the subject, as I may have had preconceived beliefs on the matter. However, I now consider myself majored in this subject, and there is information that I have now learnt and there is still yet more to learn.* A_2

> *My knowledge has expanded, and it has also been useful to me in my life and in the lives of my relatives who are children still… You asked me in the previous interview if I would be able to teach if I entered into teaching practice. Back then, I answered no. However, I now look forward to enter into teaching practice as I now possess more information about children.* (H_2 in the second interview)

The comments of the participants revealed that their increasing confidence was due to the opportunities given to them to practise teaching during the workshops at the university: as B_2 claimed, '*my knowledge improves via study of the modules, and I have been given the opportunity to practise within my role as a kindergarten teacher. Without a doubt, a teacher should set a good example. I am more enthusiastic about*

this major and the teaching practice'. Significantly, these student-teachers showed a personal commitment to learning, as they were aware that self-learning helped to advance their knowledge and ability to teach young children. Moreover, they were motivated to read books and research studies beyond course materials, and they were starting to benefit from the experiences of others. For example:

> *I feel that my knowledge has progressed and evolved, and my beliefs have also changed. I have also begun to utilise academic terminology to a greater extent. The reason behind this change is, obviously, the modules themselves in addition to the lecturers giving us supplementary information on the subject. If I don't understand something, I either research it on the internet or I ask one of the lecturers.* D_2

> *I find it difficult to prepare an educational unit and, in my opinion, this problem is not due to the content but due to the teacher's inability to deliver the necessary information sufficiently. This is to the extent that we resorted to external sources for information. As an example, I went to a kindergarten teacher and she gave me sources from which to conduct research.* (B_2 in the first interview)

Student-teachers were asked about the knowledge and skills they had to have prior to the start of the teaching practice, and the range of answers included the following aspects:

- enhanced knowledge about children's characteristics,
- the content and aims of the kindergarten curriculum in the KSA,
- the roles of kindergarten teacher,
- how to prepare the daily programme for children in the kindergarten,
- how to plan and prepare educational units for children's learning,
- how to develop children's skills for creativity,
- how to develop religious and mathematical concepts of children,
- how to solve the problems of children,
- how to interact with children,
- and how to use computer in children learning, as E_2 stated:

> *I must learn more about computers... because there is much progress in this area and children nowadays learn via computers. Therefore, I must be familiar with computers so that I am able to teach. I was expecting to find simple things that I already knew from this major, yet I noticed that the more I studied, the more I needed to learn even more.*

Moreover, it was noted from participants' comments that they were gaining knowledge that they had not expected. For example:

How to analyse the child's psychological state through his/her drawings. When the lecturer spoke about it, I was so impressed that I attempted what I had learnt on the children at home by letting them draw and then analysing what they had. For instance, my nephew always breaks things when he plays. So I sat with him and I said, 'Sweetheart, why don't we draw?' Of course, I referred to a book from the library regarding this, and obviously what the lecturer had already said. I see it as my duty to do something for this child. I entered into this major and so therefore I must make a change. H_2

Something I did not expect and yet I found anyway was the attributes of the kindergarten teacher. I did not expect it to be so important yet I realised that it is a priority for the preparation of the kindergarten teacher. B_2

It seemed that if the programme content provided more knowledge and experience for student-teachers than they had expected, they were more motivated to learn to teach. This means that they were motivated to learn to teach by previous student-teachers, and by the content of the programme, in particular, the skills and identity of the kindergarten teacher.

The comments of the participants in the second year showed that they had acquired a range of knowledge from different modules. According to the comments, all eight participants believed that the content of 'Curriculum of the Kindergarten' module was very useful for preparing them to teach children, due to the following competences: writing general educational and behavioural aims (cognitive, skill and emotional) for children's activities; preparing activities for children; designing a learning unit for kindergarten children; and assessing children's learning and development. Sample comments included the following:

I have learnt how the content of the kindergarten curriculum is, it is based on learning units. This module taught me how to design learning unit and what the general and behavioural aims are, and how we prepare unit's activities (mental cognitive, dynamic, social, art or music activities)… in this unit, we practised about 7 activities with 7 forms for children assessment, in fact this form an activity assesses the child. B_2

I know the methods of assessing children, such as the test that asks them to describe a picture, questions in the vein of 'true or false', and so on. … the educational units in the Saudi syllabus comprises of 10 units, some of which are detailed and others are brief… , such as units called 'my health and safety', 'the family', and so on. The syllabus is divided in 7 books with the main one including the teacher guide and the rest to include the educational units. D_2

> *I benefited from knowing the plan that I would be following in the kindergarten with regards to planning of the educational units, how to divide them, and what the daily schedule would be at the kindergarten. I must, as a teacher, observe all aspects of child development; complete and balanced development.* E_2

It seemed that student-teachers in the second year had started to understand the design and the content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia. They were aware of the specialist nature of their professional preparation programme. They were aware of the need for specialist knowledge in order to begin teaching practice.

Also, the participants had obtained knowledge during the module 'The Social Raising of the Child', including methods of child-rearing, parental trends in child-rearing and how these trends impact on the child's personality, factors that influence child-rearing, and what roles family, society, the mosque, educational institutions, peers, media, and so on play in child-rearing. As C_2 described:

> *We studied the role of a kindergarten teacher and how one would deal with bad behaviour from a child. We also looked at examples such as if a child picked up a habit of lying from his/her home. This module is both useful and enjoyable as it discusses the environment and society that I live in. Children will copy and easily pick up any words whether it is positive or negative. Therefore, I must watch both my words and my actions when I am around them.*

These student-teachers asserted that they had knowledge about children's needs from this module. However, their knowledge about children's characteristics was gained from a prior module in the first year which was 'Developmental Psychology'. One participant (E_2) stated: '*I cannot design a game until I take into account the child's needs and characteristics*' and others explained:

> *It is important that I learn the needs and characteristics of the children I work with because without that knowledge I won't be able to plan activities for them. In kindergarten, there are 3 levels. Each level has its own characteristics and needs; therefore we design activities that suit the level and ability of each child. We studied the effects of parental direction, and it is important that I am aware of this to better deal with the children in our work. I can tell a child's demeanour by observing how his/her parents deal with him/her at home.* D_2

> *Through my knowledge of the methods of child-rearing education, I can discern what goes on at home and to begin to treat the problem. I try to contact the child's parents so I may talk with them and understand the situation.* B_2

It seems that student-teachers saw themselves already as EC teachers. They may have been developing a professional identity that linked with their cultural identities (as future mothers).

Through the module entitled 'Design of Educational Games', the participants believed that they had acquired different knowledge and skills. Student-teacher D_2 said:

> *'Design of Educational Games' module gave me the skill to design and produce educational games appropriate for children by using local materials, and this module is related 'The Artistic Education for the Kindergarten Child*'. *I feel that the modules a continuum*

Student-teacher (E_2) gave an example to show how she had made the connection between these modules, by saying: '*I took dough modelling and shaping from the 'Artistic Education' module and I applied it in the 'Design of Educational Games' module*'. Also, student-teachers emphasised the links between modules. For example,

> *Here, all the modules become linked to one another which means that the 'Designing Educational Games' module depends on the 'Psychology of Games' module. Based on the theoretical framework that I studied in the 'Psychology of Games' module and the 'Curriculum of the Kindergarten' module, I can design educational games for the teaching and development of the child.*C_2

It seemed that these student-teachers were confirming the extent to which they were able to make connections between theoretical content and practical application. For example, they believed that they had developed abilities to make and use puppets and puppet theatre in teaching children:

> *We studied puppetry and puppet theatre and we designed many differing types of dolls by using local materials, and we learnt how to utilise this in educating the child.*C_2

> *I never before realised that dolls were so greatly beneficial in the education of children. For example, when I used to read a story to the children it used to bore them because a child's attention span does not exceed 5 minutes. However, I found that I could extend their concentration by using dolls as I read to them. This helped to convey the necessary information to the children, and drew their attention to a greater extent.* A_2

Furthermore, all eight participants believed that they had learned about pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children. It seemed that the participants recognised the importance of their experiences as learners in becoming more familiar with the

range of pedagogical strategies used with young children. The following are representative comments:

> *There are 7 strategies for teaching children that we studied. I learnt these strategies in a detailed and encompassing manner. However, I have a problem in preparing activities that are suitable for these strategies. As I practise I will then gain more experience in preparing these activities.* A_2

> *… another strategy that promotes creativity that I used was the use of water and sand so that the child creatively designs images and shapes. Also, there were other students who applied a strategy of conversation and discussion and by utilising storytelling. This would be where the teacher would tell the children an interesting story and then would go on to discuss with the children what they had benefitted from the story.* E_2

> *We worked on these strategies, and we chose the strategy of drama where we produced a performance on the manners of seeking permission.*C_2

Student-teachers pointed out that they understood the rights of the child in Islam before and after birth, and his/her rights under contemporary legislation, such as that of UNICEF and UNESCO, during the module 'Rights of the Child in Islam and Contemporary Legislations'. One participant stated:

> *This module taught me everything about the child from when he/she is a foetus to how I should deal with him/her, and teach him/her correct Islamic protocols and manners. I also learnt the rights of children internationally, not only just in an Islamic context.* A_2

They believed that the child has the right to respect and life, and they asserted these rights of the child in all aspects: health, education, nurture and social responsibility. A_2 explained her role as a teacher in this respect:

> *We do not force a child who is in kindergarten to learn something he/she doesn't like. For example, at this age, a child may not like to write and so therefore we should not force the child to do so… I realised that it is not necessary for children to know this skill at this age. However, a child should demonstrate his/her ability to learn and discover things by him/herself which develops his/her mental abilities further.*

Student-teacher (A_2) did not believe that children should be taught through directed activities in reading and writing. This is an example of how student-teachers in the second year started to define what was the best approach for them to teach young children, based on their knowledge and beliefs. They believed that child-initiated activities, including play, may be more useful than adult-directed activities. And F_2 insisted that her role was that of a facilitator to encourage the child to work*:*

> *I support the idea that the child is the one who initiates in the partaking of playing activities and the teacher should be available as a guide and also to encourage the child to work. Both are essential in these activities. Also, it would be beneficial for the teacher to prepare an activity and to have the child to help, as this would make the child become fonder of the activity.* F_2

Through the module entitled 'Environmental Education', the participants believed that they gained a good understanding of the educational context in kindergarten, as C_2 claimed, '*I learnt how to organise the learning environment to make it a positive and beneficial place for the child'*. On the other hand, student-teacher B_2 added: '*I studied the development of environmental awareness for the child, as in how to teach a child to respect the environment holistically*'. Also, the participants asserted that there was a focus on play, as A_2 stated in the following quotation:

> *We focused on playing, as this is the best method for the child to gain understanding. Initially, we spoke about the theory of playing and then playing indoors and outdoors in detail, as well as educational playing and its goals. Perhaps playing is better than other methods because it gives experiences directly, while not being abstract.*

These student-teachers showed their knowledge of child development and how children learn:

> *The child learns through play and relies on his/her senses to discover the outside world. The child doesn't understand abstract things, so we learn how to design games that are suitable to the level of the child.* E_2

> *The child learns by him/herself, and we guide him/her. Each time the child transitions from one stage to the next, he exhibits greater progress, and this is especially enhanced when children play and learn from each other so that they may progress even further.* F_2

> *Kindergarten children are at 3 levels. In the first level they learn with direct experiences because the child depends on his/her senses whilst learning. In the second level, I can implement some abstract concepts in his/her education. In the third level…, foundationally, kindergarten education relies on senses, the child learns by means of direct experience through his/her senses, and this can be influenced according to the individual child's leanings.* B_2

Student-teacher (D_2) believed that '*direct experience reinforces the amount of information a child possesses*'. All student-teachers believed that play helped children to learn, but they also insisted on the important role in children's learning and development of trips, visits to exhibitions, stories, chants and discussion. Moreover,

they began to make links between the characteristics of children and their learning. For example,

> *I must keep varying the methods I use in teaching the child so that he/she does not get bored, and I am capable of taking into consideration their different learning capacities. I teach the child how he/she should deal with his/her environment and I try to take him/her from the state of being so self-absorbed so that he/she engages with others.* E_2

The participants obtained knowledge during the module 'The Methods of Child Education', but they stated that some of the content of this module was redundant due to repetition in other modules. For example, they had learned about methods of child education, pedagogical strategies which are used with young children, play and games, theories of play, theories of learning, the ten pioneers in child education, and how to prepare an educational context appropriate for the child. Student-teacher D_2 claimed that she knew how time management for activities in the kindergarten was applied:

> *Organising time for activities is an important task because there are many differing types of activities. For example, there are individual, group, freeform, and guided activities. I learnt how the child should start and end his/her day at kindergarten. I studied how computers and their use affect children creatively, and parents should be aware that progress is in evidence.*

It seemed that student-teachers were motivated to use ICT as a pedagogical tool to support their teaching of young children. They were building their procedural knowledge about pedagogy and learning in EC, as A_2 illustrated: '*we learnt how to use computers as an implement to educate children, because it attracts them better than other tools*'. Again, student-teachers were developing their unique 'teacher identity' and they showed their knowledge of child development and learning, as E_2 stated in the following extract:

> *Delivering a complete experience to the child is an important matter, for example the activities should cover all aspects of a child's development. Without doubt, the educational foundations of the child should be an extension of their environment at home, and the kindergarten should work closely with the child's family… We learnt how to answer the questions of the children and how we could impart upon them information in a simple manner. Examples of children's questions could be, 'where did I come from?', 'why do I not give birth like you, mother?' or 'why do we die?' and so on.*

The student-teacher (E_2) said what she had learned and what she had to do as a teacher. She reflected on the educational role of family in child education, and her aim

to support a child's moral, mental, physical growth in a natural environment, similarly to in the child's family environment. Also, she would try to provide children with knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age.

Also, these student-teachers obtained knowledge about educational and behavioural problems (causes of the problem and solutions) for children during the module 'The Problems of Childhood'. They claimed that there was a marked focus on, and knowledge of, behavioural problems, and they believed, as B_2 said: '*this module will not only benefit a kindergarten teacher, but it would also benefit mothers*'. They claimed that they had the capacity to handle these problems as far as possible. They believed that discussion helped them, as A_2 stated: '*there was a discussion between the students and the lecturer regarding the problem, and the lecturer helped guide us*'. H_2 asserted: '*the lecturer would leave the last quarter of an hour of the lecture to give us examples of a problem issue that a child might face in kindergarten (such as lying). This gave me good background knowledge on how I should solve such problems for kindergarteners*'. Again the participants reflected on their identities as teachers, and they made links between a child's behaviour at kindergarten and his/her life at home: C_2 believed that: '*it is important that I know the history of each child that is admitted into the kindergarten*', and E_2 asserted that '*the way in which we raise a child has an effect on his/her behaviour. The people that are constantly around the child have an effect on him/her just as much as his/her parents, relatives, and friends*'.

According to the participants, the knowledge that the participants obtained during the module 'The Kindergarten Teacher Preparation' was very useful. It dealt specifically with: the kindergarten teacher's educational qualifications; her personal characteristics (physical, mental, moral, social and emotional); her roles and functions as a teacher and as assistant teacher; knowledge of how a teacher manages a classroom effectively; and how a teacher interacts with children and their parents. As B_2 believed: '*methods of non-verbal communication tend to be more expressive than verbal. Strengthening this form of communication in all its forms (a smile, a gift, nice words, and so on) has more of an effect on the responsiveness of the child*'.

These student-teachers believed a kindergarten teacher has a distinct identity: she has characteristics and qualifications which are distinguished from other stage teachers. Sample comments include the following:

> *The teacher is the most important factor in the educational process of children because she deals with them, executes the proposed curriculum, and provides the educational situation and the suitable teaching methodology in which they will learn. The teacher will also enrich the learning experience by using the correct educational tools, and therefore she must be highly qualified.* E_2

> *I am aware of the appearance that I should present myself with and how I should dress. I must be familiar with the characteristics of the child and I must constantly be aware so that I may better benefit the child. This is because the world is progressing. The kindergarten teacher must be collaborative with the kindergarten's management, as well as be in contact with the child's parents; therefore she must be friendly and approachable. She must also be keen and committed in attending meetings at the kindergarten. She must also have knowledge on the preparation of activities and the means by which a child is educated and she must have a plan throughout every year, month, week, and day.* C_2

In the practical part of the module, the student-teachers presented a typical lesson within a group. Each group chose a specific activity to be presented, and there were roles for them as teachers. Then the lecturer gave them instant feedback. They believed that this was useful for them, as C_2 claimed: '*I have the ability to collect information and to present it*'.

Moreover, these student-teachers believed that their confidence with regard to teaching had increased through the module 'The Physical and Kinetic Education for the Kindergarten Child'. For example,

> *The module is excellent because it has more practical aspects as opposed to theoretical. It further encouraged me in my role as a kindergarten teacher and how I would achieve my aims for activities. Also, it helped me to prepare appropriate means for the activity.* B_2

> *The activities that I have done have given me the ability to prepare further activities for the kindergarteners and how I would assess each activity.* F_2

These student teachers felt that this module had been very useful for them, and they believed that they had specialist knowledge in order to begin the teaching practice. They had learned about the stages of physical growth of children, kindergarten

children's characteristics and needs, how to develop running, jumping and leaping skills for children through dynamic/physical activities. They had also developed the ability to plan children's physical activities in the light of general education aims and behavioural aims (including those aiming to develop cognitive, emotional and practical skills) and to produce educational aids appropriate to the activity. They asserted that in a planned activity, it was necessary to consider the following: the number of children, the length of time required, and factors of security and safety for the child and teacher. Also, the equipment must be safe for the child. These student-teachers carried out activities as practical lessons in the classroom at the university. This gave them more confidence to teach children.

The last specialist module in the list of the second study year was called 'The Development of Creativity and Gifted Consideration'. The participants claimed that they had learned what was meant by the concepts of creativity and innovation, the personal characteristics of the creative children, problems that hinder creative children and their needs, achievement tests which measure creativity for creative children, and the educational strategies used with kindergarten children to develop creative critical thinking. Also, they stated that they had knowledge regarding the roles of teachers, parents, society and the media in considering creative and gifted children. Sample comments included the following:

> *As a teacher I provide a suitable atmosphere for the gifted child by having suitable tools and means available and also by having discussions with him/her. I would ask him/her for suggestions about what he would like to do… A creative child's responses differ to that of other children, so it is important that the teacher is someone who understands this… As a teacher, I must not allow this sort of child to wait whilst the rest of the class finishes its work.* D_2

> *Therefore, as a teacher, I take into account that I must present additional activities for him/her. I prefer to give the child the tools and leave him/her to discover things on his/her own.* E_2

In the practical part of the module, the participants reported that student-teachers designed in groups activities which would encourage children's creativity. They designed games and teaching aids to develop the creative thinking in children. However, student-teacher E_2 said: '*However, I require more examples of activities*

from the field of creativity and innovation. For this reason, in my role as a teacher I must look at the various references and books so that I may learn about activities that are related to this category'. Again, E_2 showed a personal commitment to learn.

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the programme content in the second study year from the student-teachers' perspectives (looking at the knowledge they had gained from the specialist modules).

Table 7.1 The programme content in the second year

Specialist modules (Theoretical/Practical)	**The important areas of the programme content (Student-teachers' knowledge/2nd year)**
Curriculum of the Kindergarten	- writing general educational aims and behavioural aims (cognitive, skill and emotional) for children's activities - preparing activities for children - designing learning unit for kindergarten children - assessing children's learning and development
The Social Raising of the Child	- methods of child-rearing - parental trends in child-rearing and how these trends impact on the child personality - factors that influence child-rearing and what the roles of family, society, the mosque, educational institutions, peers, media …and so on, in child-rearing - children's needs
Design of Educational Games	- designing and producing of educational games - making and using puppets, and puppet theatre in children learning - pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children
Rights of the Child in Islam and Contemporary Legislations	- understanding the rights of the child in Islam before and after birth, and his/her rights in contemporary legislation such as UNICEF and UNESCO
Environmental Education	- educational context in the kindergarten - organising the learning environment - how to teach a child to respect the environment holistically - play - the important role of journeys, visits to exhibition, stories, chants, and dialogue and discussion in child learning and development
The Methods of Child Education	- ways/strategies of child education, including play and games - theories of learning e.g. Montessori's ways in education - how to prepare an educational context appropriate for the child - the educational role of family in child education

The Problems of Childhood	- educational and behavioural problems for children (causes of the problem and the solutions) - capacity to handle/solve such problems for kindergarteners as far as possible
The Kindergarten Teacher Preparation	- kindergarten teacher's educational qualifications - her personal characteristics (physical, mental, moral, social and emotional) - her roles and functions as a teacher and as assistant teacher - how a teacher manages a classroom effectively, and how a teacher interacts with children and their parents - practical lessons: student-teachers as groups choose a specific activity to be presented, and there are roles for them as teachers
The Physical and Kinetic Education for the Kindergarten Child	- the stages of physical growth of children - children's characteristics and needs - how to develop running, jumping and leaping skills for children through dynamic/physical activities - ability to plan children's dynamic/physical activities which achieve more than aspects of growth - planning activities in the light of general education aims and behavioural aims - producing educational aids appropriate for the activity - factors of security and safety for the child and teacher - carrying out activities as practical lessons at the university.
The Development of Creativity and Gifted Consideration	- the concepts of creativity and innovation - the personal characteristics for the creative children - problems that hinder creative children and their needs - achievement tests which are measuring of creativity for creative children - the educational strategies used with kindergarten children to develop the creative critical thinking - the roles of teachers, parents, society and media in considering the creative and gifted children - designing activities which encourage children on the creativity - designing games, aids, and three-dimensional to develop the creative thinking for children

Overall, student-teachers in the second year were more aware of their professional preparation to be kindergarten teachers. In their learning in all these modules they learnt about different areas of professional knowledge, and they acquired a variety of experiences. It seemed that they were more confident in their abilities to teach and more aware of how to bring these areas of professional knowledge together. They started to link their new knowledge and experience with their previous knowledge and experiences from the first year. C_2 asserted this when she was talking about the

building of her knowledge of educational contexts and the daily programme for children, or learning corners in the kindergarten, and she said: '*I did not take this knowledge from one module, but I took it from many modules. Each lecturer says word or provides information, and then it is kept in my mind and it will be built with other knowledge*'.

Regarding the educational and general preparation modules, the participants believed that these modules were useful in their general education and their major. They also realised how these modules were related, as H_2 stated:

> *The 'Developmental Psychology' module expands our insight and this benefitted us greatly in our field of kindergarten education. I studied this alongside other modules because whenever I study information in 'Developmental Psychology' I feel that it is significantly related to the 'Health Education' module. The presence of these modules is pleasant.*

Student-teacher (H_2) said: '*the 'Islamic Culture' modules benefit us in our field. We studied many things about religion and we memorised chapters from the Qur'an. I feel that it is important to have an Islamic aspect in our life'.* She also talked about the modules related to Arabic and English:

> *The 'Writing and Composition' module is very beneficial because it deals with the grammatical aspect of language. This is good, and I like the Arabic language… Our problem here in this university is that the majority of us do not speak English, so if there are modules in English this would benefit us more.* H_2

These student-teachers needed more English to develop their ability for research, as A_2 explained:

> *The English language is important and we should take each year an English language module because it would benefit us. It would help in our research and our assignments because we refer back to foreign scholars such as Montessori. There isn't enough information on this subject on Arabic websites. However, I went onto the internet and I searched for her name in English and I managed to recover all her games and how to play them, which I subsequently translated into Arabic.*

It seemed that acquiring new knowledge helped to change prior beliefs from year one. These student-teachers were aware that they should know about children with SN, and they believed that they needed specialist knowledge and experience in the range of strategies for working with children with SN. They believed that children with SN

should be integrated into society, and they asserted that these children needed different teaching strategies to other children:

> *I learnt of different types of disabilities whether they were minor or severe. There are both mental and physical disabilities. I can recognise a mentally disabled child by looking at what his/her physical attributes are and also how I should deal with him/her, because I should engage him/her into society and make sure he/she doesn't feel different from any normal child. Obviously, a mentally disabled child requires different educational strategies.* E_2

They understood that these children were integrated in regular kindergartens, as A_2 stated: '*there is a condition of inclusion and I saw this at kindergarten'*. They claimed that they had learned about children with SN through the module 'Introduction to Special Education' and saw the importance of this module in their professional preparation. However, it seemed from their comments that they were concerned because they saw themselves unable to design activities for children with SN. The following were representative comments:

> *This module is very beneficial for the teacher as they would be aware of these children's needs. For example, children with hearing and sight disabilities are the ones that are combined with normal kindergarteners, and not those with complete disabilities. These partially disabled children are the ones who face learning difficulties. Frankly, this module is very useful. We studied this module on the basis that the lecturer would explain the disabilities, its symptoms, and what are its causes before or after birth. However, we did not learn how to prepare activities for this category.* A_2

> *This module gave me the ability to recognise disabled children by, for example, identifying a loner and children who suffer from learning difficulties. However, I do not know how to deal with disabled children and I do not have the ability to design activities for this category.* B_2

> *A disabled child can accomplish many things which means that disability is not a reason for a lack of accomplishment, but there are still difficulties in learning. This module gave me a theoretical idea on how I can design suitable teaching aids for disabled children.* D_2

The participants seemed to be satisfied with the lessons on their timetable. However, some of them (F_2, A_2, E_2) believed that the number of practical hours in the module for 'Design of Educational Games' were insufficient, as F_2 stated:

> *In the 'Design of Educational Games' module we need a lot of time as we are divided into groups and our responsibilities are distributed between*

> *us. The teacher wants us to accomplish the work in class so that she can see how we work, and to ensure that we have gained experience.* F_2

Although A_2 wanted to complete the work in the classroom to avoid any error, E_2 wanted to complete it at home:

> *We accomplish all the work in class under the supervision of the lecturer. In case of an error occurring we rectify it whilst we are still in the classroom. However, if we completed this work outside of class and an error occurred we may have had to start afresh.* A_2

> *In the 'Design of Educational Games' module we need more time to complete the work... This is especially the case because we are required to apply what we have learnt in class whereas in the 'Artistic Education for the Kindergarten Child' module we had enough time because we would apply the lessons at home. We would also try to design this in an attractive manner for the child and so therefore we take the necessary time.* E_2

However, the student-teacher (C_2) had other beliefs and she showed commitment to the programme. She was aware that it was important in her professional preparation to learn how to manage her time to achieve the practical applications of the theoretical content of the lecture in classroom. Her comment is in the following extract:

> *In the 'Design of Educational Games' module we bring the tools. We were previously instructed by our teacher to bring these tools to class and we must work in the room... One hour would be theoretical and another would be practical, and the remaining half an hour is for demonstrating our work. There would then be a discussion that would make it clear if we understood the work or not, and what the benefits are for us and for the children. The time provided is sufficient which is good because it teaches us how to keep track of time as we work. The material does not cost us as it is all simple and available, whether it is around us or at home.* C_2

Part Three: Teaching Styles at the University and their Effectiveness

The comments of the participants revealed that there were different methods and strategies used in the teaching modules. Although all the participants asserted that delivering/lecturing was the predominant method, they claimed that audio-visual methods were used relatively rarely. Student-teacher (G_2) said: '*I believe that the teachers adopt the use of lectures so that they can present to us as much information as possible in the allotted time. However, I do not think this is particularly useful to us as we can get the same information from a book*', whereas A_2 said: '*there is a greater effect on my learning when the lecturers give a lecture that is backed up with*

examples'. On the other hand, just one participant (H_2) stated that some lecturers adopted the approach of reading from a book during the lecture.

It seemed that student-teachers learnt more from lecturers' knowledge and experience about being qualified to teach kindergarten children, rather than just depending on the book as a reference.

The participants believed that dialogue and discussion of the subject in the class was effective in their learning, because as B_2 stated, '*each student who sits on a chair in class has some knowledge...therefore it is good to listen to each student's opinion*', and D_2 added:

> *Because dialogue and discussion has within it the expression of opinions and participation, and because I may have some wrong information, discussion becomes useful in forming a clearer picture*

These student-teachers saw themselves as more capable in discussion and dialogue, as B_2 believed: '*dialogue and discussion changes from year to year. Those of us in our second year have a greater ability to engage in discussion than we did in our first year*'. This means that as student-teachers acquired more knowledge, they were more able to discuss and consolidate what they knew.

Moreover, student-teacher A_2 insisted that feedback from the lecturer and quizzes were useful and effective in their learning; she explained that '*every two lectures we have a small quiz on the preceding two lectures so that when our final exams come we've memorised and consolidated our knowledge*'.

All student-teachers believed that group work in the class was useful and effective, especially when it related to practical application; as F_2 stated, '*group work inside the class is effective because I feel that each of the students benefits from each other's experiences and there is a sense of team spirit. There was direct experience when we made educational games for child learning*'. It could be noted from the participant's comments that if student-teachers were friends, they believed strongly that the most effective style in their learning was team/group work both inside and outside the class, whether the assignment was practical or theoretical. According to D_2, '*what I find effective in my learning is co-operative team work as there is a diversity of ideas*

between the students that result in something that is creative'. However, student-teachers who did not know each other very well preferred individual work rather than group work outside the class, especially if the assignment was related to theory. For example,

> *There is difficulty in the coordination between team members in addition to only deeply understanding and knowing the part of the assignment that I worked on, without possessing knowledge of what the other students had worked on.* A_2

> *Individual work is more effective in my learning because I am able to consolidate my knowledge in my mind and it allows me to concentrate more on my work and to be able to achieve the grade that I deserve. However, group work outside the class is a problem because I may rely on another student to do the work or vice-versa. It is also difficult to meet with fellow teammates because our lecture schedules differ. When the deadline comes about each student hasn't achieved what is expected of her, and this decreases the marks of the entire group's evaluation.* C_2

It seemed that student-teachers' beliefs may have been affected by their ambitions. They believed that the individual work style was better for their learning in order to gain a high grade in their assessment.

Part Four: The Teaching/Learning Environment at the University

Student-teacher (B_2) asserted that, '*we have a study plan that we stick to and this has a positive effect on our preparation*'. All student-teachers believed that the content of the modules was one of the positive elements of the training programme. They believed that the practical part (workshops) of the modules was the most relevant part of the programme for their preparation as kindergarten teachers. F_2 believed, '*the more I have the ability to prepare activities and to create educational games for children, the more I feel I am prepared to be a kindergarten teacher*'.

The lecturers provided support for student-teachers, as C_2 explained: '*it is known in the university that the Kindergarten Major is the department with the most support for its students, for example, the lecturers listen to us if ever a problem was to arise... Also, if we approach them for additional help between lectures they have a positive attitude and they are very helpful... They present to us all the information that we need*'. And H_2 added: '*this fact will benefit us... I feel that the lecturer is the most important thing, even more so than the modules themselves*', Student-teacher (C_2) said: '*because it is possible for the lecturer to come and not present the module*

correctly and then I would not benefit from it at all'. Moreover, F_2 claimed: '*generally, there is much in the way of moral support from the lecturers and we are comfortable with them*'. So, all participants believed that the lecturers and their support was a positive and important element in their professional preparation.

On the other hand, some of the participants (A_2, B_2, E_2, F_2, G_2) believed that the repetition of the content of some modules and redundant knowledge was one of the negative characteristics of their professional preparation, as E_2 stated: '*Although it is true that information becomes entrenched in one's mind with repetition, this leads to boredom especially if the two modules are in the same semester*'.

Furthermore, student-teacher (C_2) believed: '*the classrooms are not prepared for practical work as they are themselves designed for theoretical work only*'. While (D_2) claimed: '*one of the negative aspects in my training is the memorising of information for the sake of an exam. This is boring and exasperating because I like questions to be more objective and more a measure of my understanding rather than merely my capacity to memorise information*'. One participant explained:

> *For example, I understand what the environment means in the kindergarten... As long as I answer the question in the exam according to my understanding, and my understanding is correct, then why is my answer unacceptable? As an example, lecturers (X) and (Y) mark our answers according to our level of understanding. However, the newer lecturers require us to present to them a source that backs up our answer in the exam, and this is very difficult indeed.* H_2

Part Five: Influences on the Educational Process

Regarding changes in student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs, student-teacher A_2 stated that: '*the information I have was changed by the modules. I feel that they were selected carefully and teachers also play a role*', and B_2 explained: '*this specialisation is different from other disciplines. I study the modules not just because I must pass the final exams, but because I feel that I truly gain more knowledge*'. Also, practical application, whether through workshops or carrying out activities with children, was a factor in changing student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs. They were more able to develop their own learning to teach, they learnt themselves to become kindergarten teachers. For example,

> *My knowledge improves as I practice. For example, I learn a particular activity and then I go and apply it with my brother to see how he learns*. G_2

I never knew that I had a talent for producing excellent work. I would do some work and the lecturer would tell me, 'this is excellent'. In all honesty, I was surprised at my level of work, as I have never worked in this way before. The most wonderful thing about it is to apply what we have learnt on ourselves. This makes me feel closer to the child. I practice what I have learnt on my brother's children at home. H_2

When I have spare time at home I like to design games that help to teach and for child development. This is because I like to be aware of my abilities, to see if I am capable of designing such games. Of course, I would learn the theoretical work first, but I always like to execute what I have learnt. D_2

These student-teachers were more committed and motivated with regard to their professional preparation; for example, they planned daily and weekly study schedules to complete their assignments successfully. As one participant commented:

We study both practical and theoretical work. If I do not apply the theoretical information I have learnt, then I will forget it. Therefore, my weekly schedule must be planned carefully because this makes me feel more comfortable and it makes it easy to complete my work. I like to complete my work before schedule. H_2

Also, most student-teachers (A_2, B_2, C_2, E_2, F_2) attempted to read the previous lecture notes before attending the new lecture. Similarly, B_2, and F_2 claimed that they prepared for the new lecture, as F_2 explained:

I am keen to be informed about the next lecture via the module handbook. This is because I like to have prior experience of what the lecturer is about to give us so that I am never caught by surprise as I like to participate in lectures. F_2

In addition, all participants stated that they kept the study materials from previous modules, because they believed that each term depended on the previous term and the modules were related to each other. They believed that they would need these materials as references in teaching practice.

I keep my study materials as I feel it is useful to me in my research and activities work, and it will also benefit me in the future when I become a teacher. B_2

I like to keep some of the references I use and I keep them in my personal library at home, such as the book 'Childhood Problems'. I have made this book available as a reference to my entire household so any who asks about this subject has it readily available.G_2

> *In the future I will be a mother, and I feel that these references and sources will be of benefit to me in knowing my diet whilst I am pregnant and also in helping me to raise my children.* H_2

The comments of the participants showed that student-teachers were used to visiting the library for research. They asserted that the books were available in the university library, and they knew about the technology for searching for study materials, as D_2 stated: '*I use the computers in the library to search for books, and I am able to find any book in any shelf. I was taught how to do this by one of the library staff members*'. However, student-teacher G_2 did not know about this service. She said: '*there are plenty of books in the library. However, I did not use the search technology in the library to locate any of these books as I did not know such a thing existed*'.

The student-teachers were also asked if there were any difficulties/issues which could impact on their learning/teaching. Student-teachers F_2 and D_2 found the registration system for modules on WebCT was an issue; they saw that it did not allow for all student-teachers to enrol on all modules appropriate for the study level. Nevertheless, student-teacher D_2 considered the large amount of required work was one of the obstacles; she said: '*an excessive workload has tired us because each lecturer demands we produce work for him and because of this it is difficult for us to produce the required work*'. Student-teacher B_2 suggested that: '*the practical aspect should be given greater importance*' And C_2 added: '*we need more to apply our theoretical studies so that the information stays in my mind*'. Also, student-teachers G_2 and H_2suggested having a kindergarten attached to the college, as H_2 stated: '*we wish that there was a kindergarten that was a part of the university that we could visit so that I could, for example, see what they do in their sessions. This would be realistic and would help keep things rooted in our minds*'. While B_2 proposed: '*diversity in the teaching methods used with us*'.

Summary of the Chapter

The findings from the second year student-teacher interviews are summarized in three figures (see Appendix J, p. 348). They show the interaction between their beliefs and knowledge, a concept map of key conceptual areas for data analysis in the second study year, and the development of student-teachers' knowledge of teaching. The next chapter will present the data analysis of student-teachers in the third year.

Chapter Eight: Analysis of Student-teacher Interviews in the Third Study Year

Part One: General Information:

Student-teachers in the third study year (A_3, B_3, C_3, D_3, E_3, F_3, G_3, H_3) stated that they loved to interact with children. Although it seemed that most of participants entered the programme based on their own choice, student-teacher C_3 was also influenced by student-teachers who were already studying on the programme. She felt that this programme kept her in touch with the realities of life, while student-teacher D_3 illustrated that it was suitable for her aptitude. However, one student-teacher said:

> *In the beginning I didn't desire to study this major … However, after I began studying the modules, I began to enjoy the course because the lecturers treated us exceptionally well and the modules were actually relevant to our lives.* F_3

It seems that the programme content provided not only knowledge for student-teachers related to their contexts but it also helped them to look at their life experiences in a new light, resulting in renewed motivation to become kindergarten teachers. For example, F_3 stated: "*we learnt how to communicate with and educate children. I now look upon a child and I see his personality and his inventiveness, and I even design activities for my younger siblings so that I can examine their responses*".

Student-teacher A_3 claimed that '*there are wrong beliefs about children in society*', and asserted that she has the knowledge to be able to influence the people around her to do the correct thing with their children. Therefore, it seems clear that if student-teachers have more knowledge, they are more confident and they can act as mentors for others. Moreover, three student-teachers (A_3, B_3, H_3) saw themselves as responsible for preparing a strong generation: they wanted to learn about the world of childhood, because they believed that they would be preparing children for the future.

Part Two: Programme Content (Subject Matter and Pedagogical Strategies)

All participants believed that the content of modules that they had completed was useful as preparation for working with pre-school children, or to interact with children who were around them, for example, family and friends. They believed that their knowledge was developing: as B_3 claimed, '*my knowledge is increasing more because*

it is not limited only to the university, but also to external influences outside university as it motives my thinking'. She illustrated this with the comment: '*when I see the child behaving in different ways, my mind thinks about that and I link it to what I studied*'. A_3 added: '*I feel that the next modules also will improve me more*'.

All participants asserted that they were enjoying the Kindergarten Major, and their enjoyment of the programme had increased over time, as D_3 said: '*my desire increased and my love of the Kindergarten Major increased*'. Also, H_3 stated: '*when I first began the course I found I had difficulty in dealing with children. However, I now feel that it is a wonderful thing, and I like working with them now'*. Moreover, these student-teachers believed that they were more confident in their abilities to teach, as A_3 claimed: '*I feel that I am ready to go to kindergarten to teach children*'.

Student-teachers showed a personal commitment to learning; they developed their knowledge and skills in teaching young children. They asserted that a kindergarten teacher has a distinct identity. Comments illustrating this point included the following:

> *... when I did not know something and I was compelled to read up on the subject matter so that I would know how to present it in a suitable way to the children. It is impossible for someone to be a kindergarten teacher without being well-read, and this all depends on the student and her modules that would give her the chance to do further research.* D_3

> *In the beginning I found it difficult to prepare activities, but now I am easily able to prepare them. Our teacher gave us and explained to us the foundations, but I feel that we students played a large role ourselves. We taught ourselves and we followed the references that were available to us.* B_3

> *My major is satisfying to study, however it requires a great deal of effort and time management so that I am able to finish the work required of me. Also, the activities require preparation, and this includes all the necessary tools.* C_3

When student-teachers were asked what they were expected to know at the commencement of their teaching practice, they mentioned most of the professional knowledge mentioned by the first and second year students, but elaborated on these, as C_3 states: '*Not only do I require more information about the skill of how to communicate and deal with children, but I also need to know how to communicate*

and deal with families and also the kindergarten staff such as the management and the class teacher'. It seemed that not only had student-teachers a better awareness of their knowledge, but it was clear that gradually they were moving, with greater understanding, towards the centre of the 'community of practice'. Moreover, it seems that for some student-teachers the programme had exceeded their expectations, increasing their enthusiasm for learning to teach, as student-teacher A_3 believed: '*I gained knowledge and experiences more than that I am expected*'

Although student-teachers in the third year saw that they were more confident and ready to teach children, it seemed that they wished they could have more interaction with children and could have started teaching practice sooner. Sample comments included the following:

> *Although we gained a lot of useful information from the childhood problems module, I feel that there are additional childhood problems I do not know about because I have not had much close contact with the children at kindergarten. I want to sit with a student who has practiced and ask her about the problems she faced with her work with children.* A_3

The comments of the third year student-teachers showed that they had acquired different strands of knowledge from different modules, and were able to link elements between the modules and across their own learning. According to the comments, they had obtained in-depth knowledge during the module 'The Child's Cognitive Growth', including Piaget's theory of child thought development. They claimed to understand the role of play in the development of a child's mental growth and knew how to design cognitive games and activities for the child. Student-teacher B_3 stated: '*A child does not learn through abstract methods, but instead he/she learns and deals with things that he/she can sense*', and she added: '*A child plays, but in reality he/she is learning. My role as a teacher is to set goals that are realised via play*'. It seems that student-teachers had learnt about educational play (not about 'free play'), and at the same time, their beliefs were being influenced by the dominant educational theories presented in the programme.

Through the module entitled 'The Museum and Library of the Child', the participants were aware that the library was very important for children. They claimed that they would be able to set up a child's library in terms of furniture, organization, and the

quality of children's books and stories. They believed that they had learnt how to influence children through the use of colours and pictures to like libraries. Student-teacher D_3 reported: '*we took a workshop, student-teachers were divided into groups and the lecturer gave each group a book. Some of these children's books were good and some not so good in terms of size, design, publishing, the size of print and content. Then there was discussion among each group to present their opinion of the books. I feel that this module enabled me to work in a children's library'*. A_3 illustrated this with the comment that: '*Unfortunately, there is no exhibition specifically available for children in our city... However, as a teacher, I can make a small exhibition in the kindergarten so that I can pass the point onto the child in an entertaining fashion. This small exhibition covers several aspects including science and even cultural exhibits that link in with the child's own heritage'*. It seems that A_3 was aware of the role of the exhibition as a learning resource for children.

The participants also reported that the module 'The Child's Culture' had benefited them in terms of understanding the impact of the culture of a society on the cultural and mental development of children, as, student-teacher D_3 described:

> *Once I know the social class of the child, I can understand how his/her parents may interact with him/her, and this can be useful to me. For example, families from a wealthy background may focus more on having their children read, whilst those from a poorer background may focus more on wanting their children to eventually go into work. Also, the parents' educational background influences a child's level of understanding. Dealing with an educated parent differs greatly to dealing with an uneducated parent.* D_3

Significantly, such a generalization about wealthy families or poor families, could lead to stereotyping/labelling. If D_3 was developing stereotypes, this may not be helpful as a teacher. This is because a teacher should not judge a child according to his/her background, but should see the child as an individual in the class.

These student-teachers asserted that they had developed the ability to design and present activities associated with the child's learning of scientific and mathematical concepts, as A_3 stated: '*in the 'Development of Scientific, Environmental and Athletic Concepts' module, every student must plan and present two activities, one of them associated with children's learning of the scientific concepts and another associated*

with mathematical concepts. These activities are very important for developing a child's cognitive and numerical skills'. D_3 added: *'I have the ability to design activities for developing children's numerical skills, we studied how a child classifies, sequences, corresponds and draws similarities'*. Student-teachers believed that they knew how to provide scientific and mathematical concepts for the child through experiments in the discovery corner, as B_3 explained:

> *Educational activities must be of a sensible nature and it must be encouraged through a variety of means. We, as kindergarten teachers, provide the equipment and materials for the children. For example, teaching about magnetism requires use of magnets and materials that are attracted to them and vice versa. I never tell a child 'for example this or that' as a child never understands something unless he/she interacts with it and sees for him/herself.* B_3

It is apparent that student-teachers were aware of their professional knowledge, and that they already saw themselves as EC teachers.

Through the module entitled 'The Activities Curriculum in Kindergarten', six of the participants believed that they had developed the ability and skills to design activities for kindergarten children within the classroom through practical tasks. These activities were in certain areas (scientific, mathematical, artistic, dynamic, linguistic and musical). They asserted that the areas for development (of cognitive, emotional and practical skills) had to be taken into account in each activity. The participants claimed that they had detailed knowledge about the function and use of 'corners' inside a classroom. For example,

> *We learnt about all the corners, such as the science corner and what criteria must be met, what tools might be available, and what the goals of this corner might be... For example, the goals that are achieved by the science corner are the development of a child's investigative skills. In this way we learnt how to design a working environment in the science corner.* B_3

Through the module entitled 'The Development of Linguistic Skills', student-teacher G_3 asserted that: '*This module concerns itself with enhancing a child's vocabulary and language abilities whilst also teaching about the treatment of speech impediments. It focuses on the development of a children's ability to converse and on how they express themselves*'. Moreover, student-teacher A_3 demonstrated her ability

to make connections between the theoretical content and the practical application by saying:

> *This course addressed many theoretical aspects. I benefitted by being able to easily prepare language activities that are compatible with the levels of the children, and also set in levels progressing from easy to hard. In this course, we identified several aspects of language that should be developed in children such as listening skills, speaking, reading and writing.* A_3

Furthermore, all eight participants believed that they enjoyed the 'Child's Literature' module, and were able to link the module content to their practice. As D_3 said, '*this module was pleasant and useful'. We learnt the characteristics and different types of children's literature from stories, to songs and plays. I learnt what kinds of stories are appropriate for children at each stage of development, and how they are designed and presented to them*'. A_3 added: '*there are means used in the presentation of stories, such as dolls and picture cards*'. Student-teachers believed that they knew the criteria for children's stories, as E_3 stated: '*the lecturer gave a Power Point presentation of a collection of stories. Then he offered students the chance to criticise the style of the story; in other words, how the story was appropriate to the child's level*'. Student-teacher B_3 claimed that: '*we studied the various types and characteristics of children's theatre and its benefits in satisfying the educational needs of the children. We also studied how to make and order the theatre in various ways to attract the children's attention and to serve the goals that were set. We also used various dolls*', while A_3 asserted: '*at the end of the module, we implemented this practically*'. Student-teacher F_3 explained:

> *We studied stories and poetry in depth and provided poetry for children through chants. We wrote three stories for children from three aspects (e.g. about disabled child, assistance, and so on). In the beginning we talked among ourselves about how to write stories, but in the end we actually wrote them. I learnt how we design stories by drawing and by using local materials (e.g. broadcloth). I learnt that it is necessary to provide story with pictures for children. It was good that the lecturer showed the story, then asked students what aims the story provided.* F_3

Through the module 'The Development of Moral and Social Concepts', student-teachers gained the skills to design and produce practical activities which would contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of kindergarten children. Student-teacher B_3 claimed that '*there was emphasis on developing children's Islamic religious beliefs, And of the importance and stages of religious*

feeling for the child. Also there is a role of religious education in the child's development and personality'. Student-teacher B_3 explained how she made the connection between the content of modules by saying:

> *We have presented various moral, religious, and social concepts that are not physically tangible, such as honesty, cooperation, and others, through practical activities. This allows the child to acquire these concepts in an indirect fashion, especially when we utilise various methods such as story-telling, theatre, acting, drama, dialogue and discussion, and finally the use of role-models*. B_3

Through the module entitled 'Preparation of the Child for Reading and Writing', student-teachers were learning about aspects of child development and concepts which have pedagogical implications. G_3 asserted that '*it is highly important not to rush in the process of teaching a child how to read and write before he/she is mature both mentally and physically*'. D_3 added: '*The family's level of education affects the readiness of the child to learn how to read or write*'. These statements reflected wider educational beliefs about childhood, and about appropriate educational practices with young children. However, the participants also indicated the ways in which they could help children to be 'ready' for more formal literacy skills.

They believed that they were able to design appropriate activities to prepare children for reading and writing. Sample comments included the following:

> *Most of the programme is occupied by practical considerations and includes various aspects that aim to foster and develop the children's reading and writing skills via the training of their muscles in how to grip a pen in order to write words and letters. The module reference contains a range of activities that benefit us in practical work such as the development of auditory and visual differentiation and also that of hand-to-eye coordination.* A_3

> *In this module, we learnt the skills necessary to teach a child how to hold a pen appropriately using such methods as shaping play-dough, and deconstructing and then reconstructing items to train the small muscles of the hand. As a teacher, I do not force the child to write because it could possibly cause deficiencies.* B_3

The last specialised module in the list of the third study year is called 'Learning Disabilities'. The participants believed that they had acquired different knowledge, as illustrated in the following comment from G_3: '*this module is very important and rich in facts. We learnt many new things such as recognising learning difficulties in*

children and their causes and how we can, as teachers, deal with such issues. It is necessary to take this into consideration when planning activities'. Student-teacher B_3 claimed: '*mentally, these are normal children though they might suffer from difficulties in reading, writing and a lack of concentration*'. The participants saw the importance of the module in their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers, the relevance of a high level of information about learning difficulties, and how this specialist knowledge and experience could be applied in a range of strategies for working with children with learning difficulties. For example,

> *These children are mixed with ordinary children but they require a more enriching environment and more variety in the methods used to teach them to suit the learning difficulties they suffer from. With increased attention, they are able to overcome these difficulties and are able to raise the level of their performance.* A_3

Student-teachers were aware that children with SN were integrated in regular kindergartens, and they saw that they should know about them. Moreover, it seems that they were motivated and more enthusiastic to learn about these children outside the course materials, for example, from the experiences of others.

> *Many of my family members studied special education, so I am aware of their activities. I began to learn sign language and this was difficult in the beginning however I want to learn it.* F_3

The participants believed, as C_3 demonstrated, that '*in these modules, the practical aspect is important. I may be able to understand the theoretical aspects but it is of the utmost importance that I implement what I learn in a practical environment so that I may be able to employ my theoretical knowledge*', and B_3 added: '*we utilised and made use of a variety of play-dough implements for the education of the child, and it was enjoyable that we did this practically. This has a distinct feeling to it as you're not likely to forget what you've practiced and will be able to do the same thing in the future*'. This illustrates the extent to which the participants were making connections between theoretical content and practical application, but also reflected their identities as mothers, sisters and teachers. They made links between their acquired knowledge and their life at home, as A_3 believed: '*my knowledge of children improves especially because I always implement what I learn on my daughter and I always ask my teachers questions. For example, if I learnt in class that a child of a certain age is capable of learning a particular skill, I will try and teach it to my daughter and watch her progress so that I am able to teach her and prepare her for life*'.

Importantly, the student-teachers demonstrated how they were building their conceptual knowledge about pedagogy and learning in EC. C_3 claimed: '*the kindergarten curriculum is based upon the child's own activity, it is interested in educational activities*'. Furthermore, H_3 took into account the child's attention in the circle time during an adult-directed activity: '*education is not a strictly ordered schedule as there must be activities because a child's attention span does not exceed 10 minutes*', and F_3 added: '*if a talented child finishes from his activities, then I must motivate him/her so that he/her may begin another*'. They believed, as H_3 stated: '*we learnt a suitable amount of educational strategies*', she explained: '*the nature of the activity determines the strategy utilised for the teaching of the child*'. The guidelines on the amount of time that children will typically concentrate during adult-directed activities can be found in the Saudi preschool curriculum: for the first level it is ten minutes, for the second level 15 minutes and for the third level twenty minutes. Thus, the student teachers' beliefs about the child's attention span were influenced by the curriculum guidance.

The participants were developing their unique 'teacher identity' and their pedagogical orientations. As A_3 stated: '*a kindergarten teacher requires the ability to concentrate on all aspects of the children under her care including their physical, mental and psychological wellbeing*'. Also, C_3 added: '*as a teacher my role is not limited to transmitting the information to the child. I complete the role of the family as their primary objective is that of successfully raising their child*'. H_3 asserted: '*there must be regular contact between the child's family and the kindergarten*'. Moreover, student-teacher C_3 claimed that:

> *As a teacher I must develop the child's creativity. I always use the method of dialogue and discussion in order to discover what abilities and capacities the child possesses. If the child did not benefit from what I produced for him/her, then the problem may lie in the activity as it may not provide the child with the chance to create, discover, or to respond. Therefore it is important that I teach him/her in several ways.* C_3

The comment of C_3 revealed that increasing student-teachers' knowledge, and the opportunities given to them to practise teaching during the workshops at the university, gave them confidence to assess their performances in teaching.

Student-teachers also showed their knowledge of child learning and development, and their understanding that the child learns through play. Student-teacher D_3 believed that: '*it is important that all the programmes run by the kindergarten must be based upon play*', and another student-teacher A_3 said that, '*I am able to increase a child's knowledge drastically via playing and he/she is receptive to this. Playing activities are organised (in an indirect fashion) and not spontaneous. As a teacher, I do not use a game unless there is a clear goal behind it*'. Also, they believed that they must provide a variety of activities to promote child development and learning. Moreover, student-teacher A_3 emphasised the role of context: '*The environment has a role in the education of the child as it makes it easier for him/her to acquire knowledge in a likeable fashion*'.

Regarding the educational and general preparation modules, the participants believed what C_3 stated: '*I felt that the educational modules and the general preparation are important because some of it is linked in with the community... All of them are interconnected and I cannot distinguish between them*'.

Table 8.1 provides a summary of the programme content in the third study year from the student-teachers' perspectives (looking at the knowledge they had gained from the specialist modules).

Table 8.1 The programme content in the third year

Specialist modules (Theoretical/Practical)	**The important areas of the programme content (Student-teachers' knowledge/3th year)**
The Child's Cognitive Growth	- Piaget's theory and how the child thinks - how to design cognitive games and activities of the child - the role of play in the development of a child's mental growth
Museum and Library of the Child	- establishing of a child's library in terms of: furniture, organization, and the quality of children's books and stories - how to attract children to like libraries through the colours and pictures used - exhibition as one of the learning sources for children
The Child's Culture	- the impact of culture of the society on cultural and mental development of children - the factors influencing the child's culture

Development of Scientific, Environmental and Athletic Concepts	- designing and presenting activities associated with the child's learning of scientific and mathematical concepts - how to teach mathematical concepts for children: classification, sequence, correspond and similarity
The Activities Curriculum in Kindergarten	- the corners inside a classroom - designing and presenting activities for children which are inside the classroom, these activities are in certain areas (scientific, mathematical, artistic, dynamic, linguistic and musical).
The Development of Linguistic Skills	-the development of a child's ability to converse, and how children express themselves - preparing language activities that are compatible with the levels of the children, and also set in levels progressing from easy to hard.
Child's Literature	- different types of children's literature e.g. stories and poetry - kinds of stories appropriate for children - the criteria of children's stories - how stories are designed and presented to children - using dolls and picture in the presentation of stories - types and characteristics of children's theatre and its benefits in satisfying the educational needs of the children - how to make and order the theatre in various ways to attract the children's attention and to serve the goals that were set - providing poetry for children through chants/songs
The Development of the Moral and Social Concepts	- the role of religious education in the child's development and personality - designing and providing activities which contribute to the development of the moral, religious and social concepts of children by story-telling, theatre, acting, drama, dialogue and discussion
Preparation of the Child for Reading and Writing	- concepts about readiness and child development, these concepts have pedagogical implications - designing appropriate activities to prepare children for reading and writing
Learning Disabilities	- recognising learning difficulties in children and their causes - how can, as teachers, to deal with such issues

Overall, student-teachers demonstrated that they had 'meta-cognitive' knowledge and understanding. They were able to make connections across areas of learning and experience, discuss their beliefs and theories, and identify the ways in which these could be applied in practice. So, the model of progression was one of increasing and deepening knowledge and understanding, and being able to articulate the theories on which their practice would be developed. They were also noticing children's behaviour in a range of contexts (for example at home), and thinking about their own beliefs and theories. Moreover, they were more motivated to be kindergarten teachers, because the programme was related to their context and it kept them in touch with the realities of life. They were more enthusiastic to learn outside course materials and benefit from the experiences of others. Also, they were more confident about their abilities to teach, and they could present themselves as mentors for others. They saw themselves as responsible for preparing a strong generation. Furthermore, they were more committed to learning and to developing their own knowledge and ability to teach young children. These student-teachers saw themselves already as EC teachers; they were developing a professional identity that linked with their cultural identities and reflected the dominant values and beliefs in society. However, these identities may have differed from one student-teacher to the next. This means that these identities may not result in uniform practices when they were in the fourth year. They demonstrated more capacity to build their conceptual knowledge about pedagogy and learning in EC, and to assess their beliefs about teaching. Student-teachers' beliefs were being influenced by the dominant educational theories that were used in the programme. Piaget seems to be the main theorist regarding play, learning and development, and the student-teachers seemed to be developing Piagetian ideas about readiness for learning, and appropriate types of activities. It is noteworthy that, while the student-teachers were introduced to a number of important theories about child development, they focused predominantly on Piaget's theories, without attempting any critique of it. This may be due to the importance given to this work by the lecturers on the programme.

Part Three: Teaching Styles at the University and their Effectiveness

The participants revealed that lecturing was the predominant teaching method, while audio-visual methods were used relatively rarely. Most participants believed that individual work was useful in their learning because it helped to consolidate their

knowledge. For example, D_3 said that '*Individual work distinguishes each student from her colleagues and highlights her efficiency*'. However, all participants also believed strongly that team/group work, whether inside or outside the class, was useful and effective in their learning. They asserted that the group work method was used frequently, and believed that dialogue and discussion through team/group work helped them to exchange knowledge and experiences, as well as exploring each other's points of view. Moreover, they believed that this approach gave them more confidence to talk, and they believed that there was competition between groups: as C_3 stated, '*each group knows what the other group has done and what it is about to present*'. This reveals that if student-teachers acquired more knowledge and experiences, they were motivated to demonstrate the best of what they had learnt of the programme content.

While student-teachers apparently realized the importance of group and teamwork in teaching, they also understood that teachers needed to co-operate with each other, as D_3 stated:

> *Group work fosters the characteristic of patience. This is because group work entails working with a variety of different personalities and, as a result, the way in which you treat people differs. This is important to me as a teacher in the future because I will be dealing with other teachers and the headmistress of the kindergarten.* D_3

This comment indicated a growing understanding of professionalism in practice.

Part Four: The Teaching/Learning Environment at the University

The participants believed that the most relevant aspect of their preparation was the content of the modules. A_3 asserted that '*the knowledge that has been gotten from the modules is very useful*', and D_3 said: '*modules are really comprehensive'.* All student-teachers emphasized the important role of practical application (workshops) in their professional preparation; B_3 believed that: '*the planning and performance of the activities is the most important part which makes me feel that I am prepared to be a kindergarten teacher... as interacting with children will be through the activities'.* Moreover, they believed that the lecturers' experiences and their support were positive elements in student-teachers' preparation, as D_3 claimed: '*I am very glad with my teachers, the majority of them are very competent'.* And B_3 described:

> *Some of my lectures take me to a whole new world, they make me deeply think with all the useful examples they give to verify the subject*

On the other hand, the comments of the participants showed that there were differences in student-teachers' beliefs about the elements that were less useful in their professional preparation. For example, student-teacher A_3 said that '*the content of some modules is repeated in knowledge, we studied it before and I feel that it is repeated itself*'. However, student-teacher F_3 believed that 'r*epetition is good, so it gives motivation to participate and debate in lecture*', and C_3 stated that '*the number of the students in the classrooms is so big. I think if we were less, it would be better*'. Moreover, student-teacher G_3 believed that '*the pressure and the load of work affect the quality of our work*'. And F_3 added, '*there is no academic supervisor to lead us and help us with our problems*'.

All participants believed that the classrooms were not suitable for practical work, and therefore they needed halls and labs to practise. Sample comments included the following:

> *There are no special halls for practical application, and there are no labs for us. If we had them, we would be able to meet after lectures and work in them.* B_3

> *As an example 'The Physical and Kinetic Education for the Kindergarten Child' module requires a wide place, sometimes we change the physical activity because there is not enough area to move or the chairs in the classroom is fixed to the ground.* C_3

> *We need to rooms for practical activities and private stores for keeping the tools, materials and productions.* D_3

All participants believed that the design of the academic plan was good and coherent; G_3 stated that: '*the study plan design is perfectly co-ordinated to get the knowledge gradually*'. However, one participant (A_3) claimed that '*I feel that I am under pressure because I am studying modules of two different levels at the same time, and both of them require hard work. I would not be facing this problem, if I had a commitment to the study plan'.* Although A_3 believed that she had made progress in her professional preparation, she found the work very demanding.

Part Five: Influences on the Educational Process

The participants believed that the content of the modules was a factor in changing their knowledge and beliefs, as student-teacher E_3 stated: '*all the modules complete one another and they also transition in stages*'. Through these modules, D_3 explained that '*I had a great desire to learn and change, and change I did. I also had a desire to change the community and leave my mark on it*'. Also, student-teachers F_3 and H_3 claimed that the lecturers played a role. Moreover, F_3 believed: '*the practical application that we do it every day*', while E_3 believed that reading extensively was a factor in changing her knowledge and beliefs. Sample comments included the following:

> *I feel that the library prepares me to be a kindergarten teacher, and I spend my free time there engaging in research. This gives me more enthusiasm for participation in lectures, and I also do not worry that I will not know how to treat a child's issues because I have learnt much from books.* H_3

> *I like searching online for information that is linked to my subject area.* G_3

The participants were more committed and motivated with regard to their professional preparation, as D_3 argued: '*time management is very important in education*', and they asserted, as F_3 stated: '*I do not like to delay my duties*'. They planned their weekly study to complete their assignments successfully. Comments illustrating this point included the following:

> *I like to organise my weekly work because the kindergarten teacher profession has a lot of work, especially in the preparation of activities. Therefore, it is important that a student organises her time and tools effectively before she begins preparation for activities.* D_3

> *I always prepare weekly plans and I try to execute these although sometimes this is not possible due to extenuating circumstances. These circumstances could be family related, as I am a mother*. C_3

Student-teachers D_3 and A_3 attempted to read the previous lecture notes for revision:

> *I am always certain to read up on the previous lecture prior to attending the upcoming one, because they are all interlinked*. D_3

> *I always research the material of the previous lecture prior to the upcoming one so that if I have any questions pertaining to it I can easily ask*. A_3

All participants stated that they kept the study materials from previous modules, because they believed that each term added to the previous content incrementally.

They also believed that they would need these materials as references in teaching practice. One participant (C_3) stated that '*I like to keep the books because I feel that they offer complete and clear facts. I keep them because I am certain that it will benefit me when I come to practical education*'.

The participants were dependent on lecturers to provide the necessary information about the modules. Student-teacher B_3 claimed: '*up until now, we have yet to use the university's WebCT to review previous lectures. We have grown accustomed to the modular books specified by the lecturer"* and E_3 said: '*I do not know how to use the WebCT to find data relevant to the module*'. However, F_3 asserted: '*the 'Special Teaching Skills' module is available on the WebCT, and it has details on the module. This is very useful, particularly when the student has been absent or unable to attend due to illness*' and H_3 added: '*Details regarding the 'Use of Computers in Education' module can be found on the WebCT*'.

Student-teacher H_3 claimed that she was used to visiting the university library often for research. However, B_3, D_3, E_3, and G_3 claimed, as E_3 said: '*I never visit the library unless I have research to do*'. Although E_3 and B_3 asserted that there were abundant books available in the university library, A_3, C_3, D_3 and G_3 claimed that they searched for sources by using the Google network.

Moreover, the comments of the participants revealed that student-teachers were not used to using technology for finding books in the university library; B_3 stated that '*I search for books in the traditional way in the sense that I search the bookshelves and I read the titles to see if the book is relevant to my subject or not. However, I still have no idea how to use the electronic library searching tools*'. While B_3 and D_3 claimed that they did not know about the technology for searching for study materials, C_3 stated: '*I used the computer in the library for searching only once*'. On the other hand, student-teacher F_3 stated: '*I do not use the technology available in the library and this is due to a shortcoming from the librarians; they did not show us how to use this technology. We needed to learn this from the beginning*'. However, C_3 claimed: '*The library staff may fulfil their duties, however the problem lies in that the student herself may not have the inclination to read the instructions or to learn how to work within the system that is prevalent in the library*'.

When asked if there were any difficulties/issues or suggestions which could impact on their learning/teaching, most student-teachers (C_3, D_3, E_3, F_3, G_3) suggested creating a kindergarten attached to the college. As C_3 stated: '*we want a kindergarten because I would like to implement what I learn with children so that it the knowledge may be fully incorporated into my mind. I fear that if I do not practically implement what I have learnt, then I may forget it just as I have done regarding a lot of unimplemented facts*'. A_3, F_3, G_3, H_3 also suggested large areas for conducting practical activities, as well as labs/rooms for practical work with ready availability of tools and materials.

Summary of the Chapter

The findings from the third year student-teacher interviews are summarized in three figures (see Appendix K, p. 351). They show the interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge, a concept map of key conceptual areas for data analysis, and the development of student-teachers' knowledge of teaching. This leads now into the fourth analysis chapter of student-teachers in the fourth study year.

Chapter Nine: Analysis of Student-teacher Interviews in the Fourth Study Year

Part One: General Information

When student-teachers in the fourth study year/seventh level (A_4, B_4, C_4, D_4, E_4, F_4, G_4, H_4) were asked why they had joined the Kindergarten Major, they stated that they loved to interact with children, and they liked learning about childhood. They all asserted that they were enjoying the Kindergarten Major, and their studies confirmed for them that the course was the correct choice. Sample comments included the following:

> *My love for this major, let me to enter in. Let me tell you about my liking for this subject. It is a new major, and I wanted to know about the world of childhood, and how to interact with children. I wanted to understand how children think and how they can solve their problems by themselves through me.* B_4

> *I joined to the Kindergarten Major at the college of education because this major was new at university. I wished to discover what activities and programmes this major contained and wanted to know how to interact with children. When I started my studies I realised that I was enjoying it... and I felt that I was comfortable with this major.* A_4

Student-teacher E_4 chose the Kindergarten Major because of her previous experiences which was that people behaved badly towards children; she was motivated to do something about what she saw as wrong attitudes. Her comment was:

> *I have witnessed strange ways of interacting with children from those around me, they do not deal with the child as a human being with the ability to understand... When a child makes a mistake or does something wrong, these people instantly prefer to punish the child rather than seeking to explain to the child why he/she did wrong.* E_4

Although all participants entered the programme based on their own choice, C_4 was influenced by her friends who joined this major. She believed that the programme was suitable for her personality, and she gave an example to confirm her choice:

> *I really liked my major last year because I felt that the activities and work was very enjoyable. I like practical activities and I enjoy producing new means of education as part of a group effort where we then go on to present our work. I felt that this was suitable to my personality, I also now feel that it is impossible for me to become a teacher for any other level of education.* C_4

Student-teacher C_4 confirmed that when a student-teacher worked creatively with her hands in order to produce aids and games for child learning and development, it seemed that she was motivated more to be a kindergarten teacher.

Part Two: Programme Content (Subject Matter and Pedagogical Strategies)

Student-teachers believed that the content of the modules that they had completed was useful, and they believed that all modules were related to each other. They were starting to talk about relating theory to practice. B_4 claimed:

> *I did not feel that there was a lack of specialized modules. I feel that the modules taught to us were comprehensive. They were useful for all aspects. I feel that all the modules prepared me to be a kindergarten teacher, even if there was no particular talk about KSA. I feel this because I went to kindergarten through the 'Field Practice' module and I saw everything*

It is clear from B_4's comment that there was a common conception about working with young children, which reflected the cultural approaches and values within Middle East countries (as well as some wider universal ideas from the west). Student-teacher D_4 supported this point by saying: '*I believe that the goals of kindergarten are similar in many countries, with even the educational units sharing similarities with just different names*'. This notion could be due to the fact that the students' reference books on ECE come mostly from Egypt and other Middle East countries. She clarified her point by saying:

> *Perhaps the content of the educational units differ depending on the country. For example there is the 'my kindergarten' unit which we do not have in the KSA. However, we have one for the primary weeks. Also there is the 'animals' unit and we have no unit of the same name. However, in our syllabus, this unit is combined with another one.* D_4

Importantly, the participants also believed that their knowledge and beliefs were not limited only to interactions with kindergarten children, but they noticed children's behaviour in a range of contexts. For example, as D4 indicated, she was using her knowledge to interpret her observations of children's behaviour in contexts outside of the kindergarten. She showed how her own beliefs and theories could be applied.

> *These modules prepare me to be a kindergarten teacher, and how to deal with children in the kindergarten. At the same time, when there is a situation with a child in the family, or a behavioural issue, I have learned how to deal with this. I can say "yes, the child did this because of this".* D_4

B_4 believed that there was a need for content which focused on the delivery of the story in terms of sounds. She explained: '*I mean the art or skill of the delivery of the story. In the 'Child's Literature' module the lecturer asked the students to record their sounds as attached to written stories for children. Students did not agree because the lecturer was a man*'. This demonstrated that cultural context impacted on student-teachers' preparation. While A_4 and D_4 believed that there was a need for content which explained how to answer children's questions, A_4 clarified: '*especially when children ask us embarrassing questions. I need realities, stories and examples, where if children ask I know how to answer them easily*'. This reflects the importance of their knowledge and beliefs being applied in practice. Moreover, A_4 believed that some of the modules were not very useful and needed to be reconsidered. However, she linked that to lecturers' competence, and gave an example of that:

> *I feel that the 'Artistic Education for the Kindergarten Child' module was not useful for me. Three hours every week were lost with this module. I studied colours and this was not a new thing for me ... I feel that the module content is useful but the lecturer did not present this module in a correct way.* A_4

This comment suggested that some repetition would be inevitable for some students, because of their varying earlier experiences. However, it was not always possible to differentiate module content to take account of this.

Student-teachers showed a personal commitment to learning and understanding the links between different areas of knowledge, such as child development, content knowledge (the curriculum) and procedural knowledge (pedagogical practices). They were able to use the theories on which their teaching practice would be built. Comments illustrating this point included the following:

> *Before I practically apply teaching, I will try to innovate new ideas and teaching aids for children whether it's during play time or when I'm considering ways of presenting the circle. I will see what educational units have been applied in the kindergarten during the second semester so that I will be in a better position to innovate*. D_4

When student-teachers were asked what they were expected to know to begin the teaching practice, student-teacher F_4 reported: '*I found what was expected through the modules that were taught. I feel that I learned more than enough through the activities and practical modules*'. The comments of the participants revealed that they

were aware of their current knowledge. Comments illustrating this point included the following:

> *I wanted to know about the periods of the daily programme for kindergarten... I wanted to know about child psychology, how children think, how the teacher interacts with children in the classroom and how the head teacher interacts with children and teachers. I discovered all this. Also, I wanted to know how to plan and prepare activities for children, and I found this out through the modules that were taught.* B_4

Student-teachers showed that they had learned different kinds of knowledge from different modules, including very valuable counselling and supervision skills during the module 'The Child's Counselling and Advising'. Also, F_4 claimed that student-teachers had learnt how to manage a classroom and maintain children's attention through the use of stories and chants. For example, B_4 believed: '*when the child behaves badly, I, as a kindergarten teacher, do not notice this behaviour in a direct way, but by a narrative story which contains the child's wrong behaviour until he takes the message and avoids this behaviour in future'*. It seemed that student-teachers were more able to identify the ways in which these could be applied in teaching practice. The participants illustrated that they knew about the stages of growth from childhood to adolescence to old age, as exemplified by student-teacher A_4: '*a child's skills develop in a sequential form, so we cannot force a child to do anything because children have individual differences'*. Although A_4 believed that there were individual differences between children, it seemed that A_4 was not able to question or challenge the educational theories that were used in the programme because she believed that a child's skills develop in a sequential form. However, there is evidence which suggests that not everybody develops according to a predicted progression, and sometimes very bright children may miss out part of the sequence. For example, one child may progress in this way, yet another child may develop a particular skill sooner and then move on to acquiring competency in another area, so there is no simple linear pattern, or correlation, between age and skills or abilities, because children develop at different rates.

Through the module entitled 'Programmes of Preparation for the Pre-School Child', A_4 stated that she had studied ten pioneers in children's education and their philosophies (e.g. Piaget, Rousseau, Freud, Montessori, and so on). She claimed that she also knew about compensatory programmes for children who could not enter

kindergarten. For example, as she noted '*head start programme in the USA*'. She believed: '*these programmes prepare children for school because they provide many things that are similar to those found in the kindergarten'.* Student-teachers attended workshops in this module, where each group chose and prepared a unit. A_4 stated: *'we imagined the topics presented to children'.*

Three student-teachers claimed that in this module they were expected to prepare programmes for children to cover both the morning and afternoon. A_4 said: *'unfortunately, we did not do this'.* Student-teacher B_4 asserted that in this module student-teachers asked the lecturer to teach them at least the basics of programmes for children, but the lecturer asked student-teachers to read samples from a book. Then she said to them, *'can you apply it?*' B_4 said: *'I could not apply it',* and D_4 added that the lecturer asked student-teachers to present the work in the coming week, D_4 believed: *'it did not give us the time or opportunity to be innovative when coming up with activities. She limited us in what we could do*'. However, B_4 believed that they knew that when they went to another lecturer to ask her to explain to them how they should prepare programmes for children. B_4 said: '*it was simple. It is through programmes throughout the day at kindergarten (which start with the circle period, then the outside play period, then the meal period, then the period of free play in the corners (inside the classroom) then the last meeting period*'. It seemed that the participants reflected the important role of the lecturers' knowledge and experience in their preparation, as one participant commented:

> *For example, if I wanted to set up a programme that lasted an entire day regarding transportation, I wouldn't be able to do it. I direct the source of this problem at the teacher because the other group were taught how to do this by their own teacher. They started to design programmes for children from the third lecture. D_4*

The participants also obtained knowledge during the module 'Kindergarten Administration', in which they claimed that they had studied more about the administrative and leadership qualities of the director, and how they, as kindergarten teachers, should interact with the director. They studied aspects of administration such as how to maintain successful communication, how to prepare reports, how to observe sessions and the administrative structure in the kindergarten. One student-teacher explained that:

> *We studied the roles and functions of a kindergarten teacher and director, and kindergarten staff (workers). I gained knowledge of the records of children and administration. It is necessary for the kindergarten teacher to keep records of children.* B_4

The comments of the participants were evidence of an increasing and deepening understanding which enabled them to discover the ranking of knowledge in terms of its importance in informing their preparation for practice. Student-teacher C_4 stated that it was necessary for the 'Kindergarten Administration' module to be placed in the first study levels, not in the seventh level. She claimed that through this module, they understood in depth about the periods in the daily programme for kindergartens in KSA. She explained that:

> *From the beginning, we did not learn the time periods of the daily programme. We used to hear from our teachers that there was a class period, then a period for playing outdoors, but they did not explain to us in what order these periods would take place, or the precise time it should take. These are fundamental to our specialisation and should have been elaborated upon from the beginning.* C_4

Through the module entitled 'The Child's Psychological Health', the participants believed that they had learnt about child psychological and defensive tricks applied by children to justify their actions. Student-teacher A_4 stated: '*when I see a child I can know what his/her feelings are and what is happening inside him/her*'. They asserted that they studied theories that explain the psychology and health of the child (for example, the behavioural school, the humanity school, the knowledge school and the analytical school). Also, they claimed that they knew the instruments used to deal with the psychological health of the child. Moreover, they believed that this module was very useful for them. As B_4 stated, '*It is useful for me to know how to handle a child who faces psychological problems (e.g. stubbornness, introversion, withdrawal, frustration and autism)'*. It seems that student-teachers were able to articulate their theoretical knowledge in their teaching practice.

With regard to the module entitled 'Field Practice', student-teachers stated the nature of this module: at the beginning of term they had three theoretical lectures at university over three weeks, which gave them an overview of kindergarten before their visits. These included a description of the teaching corners and how they could be distributed in the classroom. Then, during the three subsequent weeks, they had

one visit for 2-3 hours every week for observations at the kindergarten. For the remaining weeks until the end of the term (at least 6 weeks) they, as student-teachers, interacted with children at the kindergarten in a 2-3 hour visit every week. The participants seemed satisfied because they had started to interact with children, and the visits gave them an idea of how to interact with children in a real context. Student-teacher B_4 stated that '*through my interaction with children, I felt that I understood child psychology and I know what they want*'. She believed that what she knew about the kindergarten curriculum in KSA was sufficient. Thus, it seems that student-teachers were more confident and their knowledge and understanding were consolidated in teaching practice. They gave an example to confirm the theory-practice relationship by saying:

> *I know how to plan activities, however applying them and using them suitably throughout the daily programme was all via the 'Field Practice' module.* E_4

> *This module served me well as it gives you practice for real world situations. I worked with the children, the teachers, and the head mistress. I had the opportunity to observe the entire plan and operation and this taught me what to do in the future.* C_4

The participants reflected the importance of their visits to kindergarten in their own learning, as B_4 believed that when she went to kindergarten to observe the 'Field Practice' module, she knew how children start and finish their day in kindergarten. Similarly, E_4 said '*I witnessed how the teacher applies and utilises activities for the development of language and communication skills and how she teaches the children*'. A_4 also highlighted the relationships between the modules and experience by saying: '*I learned about periods of the daily programme from everywhere*'. Moreover, student-teachers explained in detail the skills they acquired in the 'Field Practice' module: every week, each student-teacher was responsible for providing activities, including all of the equipment, for children for a number of periods in the daily routine in the kindergarten, as a compulsory part of the programme. In their practice placements, the education administration of the kindergartens determined which educational units and subjects (content) would be taught by student-teachers. However, for preparing lessons, they followed the same instructions which had been taught by their lecturers at university (from the writing of aims to the assessment stage). During their visits to kindergarten, there was attendance, observation and assessment of student-teachers' work by lecturers who taught the 'Field Practice'

module. Although it seemed that all participants were confident about preparing lesson plans for children, D_4 claimed:

> *Our problem is that we studied one thing, and then experienced an entirely different thing during our field training. In other words, we made complete preparations for the class and exerted a lot of effort but on the other hand the kindergarten teachers themselves had their work prepared and printed for them, and even their teaching aids were prepared.*

These student-teachers were demonstrating how they were building their conceptual knowledge of pedagogy and learning in EC, and they claimed that there was sufficient emphasis on pedagogical strategies used with young children. They believed that there were many strategies, such as strategies of dialogue and debate, strategies of discovery and experimentation, direct experience, individual learning, problem-solving strategies, use of audio-visual aids during teaching, strategies of trial and error, play strategy, and collaborative learning. Six student teachers agreed that they had ability to choose and use an appropriate strategy for children's learning. Therefore, it seemed that student-teachers could determine the most important strategy for a child's learning, and they believed that it depended on the type of activity. Sample comments included the following:

> *In the corners it is preferable to utilise the strategy of discovery whereas during circle time it is preferable to begin with problem solving methods. I used this strategy and the subject of the circle was the carpenter profession. I began by telling a story about how my wardrobe broke and how I like to take care of my things and so on, and then the children began giving me suggestions on how I could solve the problem until they finally realised what it is that a carpenter does. I felt that children have a great ability for presenting solutions to problems*. D_4

> *I believe that a strategy of dialogue and debate, and direct experience are very important in a child's learning, they develop a child's cognitive abilities. Through my dialogue with a child, I can discover what is inside the child and what his/her thinking is. Also, a strategy of trial and error is important. Through activities, a child learns from his/her error and he/she corrects it him/herself.* B_4

However, C_4 believed that some strategies, such as lecturing, were not suitable for children. She believed that this type of strategy was only suitable in cases where a story was being told to children or to briefly outline ideas to them.

Moreover, five of student-teachers believed that they had learnt sufficiently about methods to assess children, as B_4 claimed: '*this is because each prepared activity*

must be followed by evaluation'. They believed that they had gained this experience from the preparation of activities. As one participant commented:

> *Practical application has allowed us to acquire the skill of appraising the child appropriately. Each activity has its own method of appraisal, for example in games involving movement we use a "note card" and observe whether or not the child has mastered the appropriate skill or not.* C_4

Student-teachers asserted that they had designed educational units for kindergarten children. However, there was not enough emphasis on the KSA units for children's learning in the EC curriculum. A_4 claimed that there was not sufficient emphasis on the kindergarten curriculum in KSA: *'Dr. A. was the only one who said students focused on the content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia when preparing the units for children's learning*'. However, B_4 commented on this point:

> *Lecturers talked generally, they did not talk in particular about KSA... When I went to the kindergarten, I did not feel that there was a difference between what I studied in university and what is found in kindergarten in KSA. I saw what I studied. But certainly, it is best if lecturers give us vision about the kindergarten curriculum in KSA.*

The participants believed that these modules taught them how to organize an educational context inside or outside the classroom to enable children to develop and learn. A_4 stated: '*I studied what conditions must be available in the classroom and the corners*'. They emphasised the importance of having practical visits as part of the modules 'Entrance to Kindergarten' and 'The Kindergarten Teacher Preparation'.D_4 stated that: '*I learnt from this the contents of the class session, and via the modules they would make sure of the facts about the educational environment in the kindergarten. If we didn't go to the kindergarten in these modules it would have been a problem for us in the 'Field Practice' module*'. As the student-teachers were nearing the end of their degree, it was evident from their comments that they were able to appreciate both the content and the rationale behind the modules they were learning.

Also, student-teachers showed their knowledge about child development and how the child learns. They believed that the child's growth at the kindergarten stage is fast due to the child's ability to learn in a stimulating and caring environment, as C_4 stated: *'at this stage he/she absorbs more information than in any other stage in his/her life*'. D_4 believed that the child learns through self-learning, she said: *'if he/she wishes to learn he/she will, and if he/she does not wish to learn then he/she won't.'* Because of this,

she believed that it was important that she gave children the motivation to learn. However, E_4 believed that:

> *The child develops more in the kindergarten than the home because there is someone at hand to guide and teach him/her. For example, during the outdoor play session we encourage the child's physical skills and abilities such as balancing, throwing and jumping before we start playing for real. I feel that it is impossible for the mother to interact with her child in this way at home.* E_4

All participants believed that the child learns through play. Student-teacher A_4 believed that a child's life is play and he/she learns mainly through play rather than through formal learning. However, it seemed that she had a linear developmental view of learning which may have been influenced by the module content (which had a focus on Piaget's developmental theories):

> *At the age of two, a child plays alone for enjoyment, which means that he/she is not aware of who/what he/she is. At the age of four, play is social, and a child starts to join in and play with other children. At the age of five, a child starts with realistic play. I mean not all play, just imagination. The child starts to learn what roles are. I mean, that the child understands what the doctor concept means. So, a kindergarten teacher should utilize/exploit this stage in a child's learning.* A_4

They believed that a child learns through stories, and B_4 believed that they should help children to discover not only the plot in a story but also its underlying message. She said: '*we present a story containing a problem. Children gain the ability to solve the problem in the story*'. Hence, A_4 asserted that a child learns many values through a story. Moreover, the majority (six student-teachers) believed that a child learns reading and writing through pictures, where there is a picture corresponding to words or letters. One student-teacher explained this:

> *A child learns more by pictures. Under the picture is a word indicating this picture, the child will link the picture and the word. So, the child learns by use of audio-visual aids.* A_4

The participants were aware of their roles as teachers. They believed that they should take into account the child's characteristics, needs and growth aspects when they designed activities to prepare children for reading and writing. As F_4 commented, '*it is very important that children see their work produced. So the kindergarten teacher should exhibit children's works in the classroom*'. D_4 believed that the child should not be given simple learning aids to use as there must be a level of complexity and

difficulty associated with the aid so as to encourage thinking. She added: *'I have witnessed in the kindergarten that if teachers give the children simple games to play with in the cognitive corner, then they do not use it*'. Therefore, B_4 asserted that the kindergarten teacher should use all her senses and be flexible, adaptable and calm with children. These student-teachers gave another example of 'teacher identity', when they were talking about the teacher as resource maker and as provider. For example:

> *Some children do not have the ability to talk, and my role as kindergarten teacher is to design appropriate activities for children's abilities. There must be dialogue between the teacher and the child through the use of stories. And there is a need for aids, games, masks, puppet theatres and puppets. I let the child repeat the narrative of the story, or perhaps represent the narrative of a story. I leave the story open until it is completed by the child. The aim is the development of linguistic skills of the child.* A_4

> *Creativity is creating new things. For example, I give the child an empty box such as a tissues box and I ask him/her to do anything he/she wants with the box. I should, as a kindergarten teacher, provide materials, and encourage the child in creativity, and foster him/her verbally and morally*. H_4.

Moreover, through the visits to kindergarten, E_4 claimed that bright children complete activities faster than others. Therefore, she claimed that she provided for them toys in the cognitive corner and stories in the library corner. However, she understood that she should know about innovation. It seemed that E_4 was more enthusiastic to learn outside course materials to provide activities for these children:

> *I now find difficulty in providing adequate activities for the talented children. Therefore, I want to do more research so that I may further improve myself.* E_4

The participants believed that the family and the kindergarten should work together. They saw that the role of a family should be related to the role of a kindergarten, because they believed that children's behaviour reflects the parents' trends in child-rearing. So, these student-teachers gave an example of 'teacher identity' in home-school interaction:

> *It is wrong that a family works on one side and the kindergarten on another side. So, when I become a kindergarten teacher I must be connected with the children's families to discuss children matters and problems, not just provide children with knowledge and skills.* A_4

> *It is necessary for the kindergarten teacher to keep records for children which contain information relating to the child, including the child's vaccines. I can refer to it to learn about the child's position. When I want to contact the child's family it is through these records.* G_4

Student-teachers reflected on the importance of the practical aspect of their learning, which helped to build their confidence. They asserted that they had the ability to design, produce, and use educational aids, as well as educational games - B_4 said: *'really, I am confident about this. I know how to achieve the aims of a game and the appropriate time to present the game*'. Moreover, the participants believed that they had the ability to plan/design and prepare activities for children's learning and development, including activity name, type of activity, the duration of the activity, the aims, tools and educational means, the strategy used, and assessment. This was supported by student-teachers' statements, including, for example:

> Each *module contains practice. I believe that this is enough. We prepared activities in all specialized modules. Sometimes I stand up as a teacher to present these activities as a practical application and others students act as the children*. H_4

Therefore, student-teacher A_4 believed that scientific and mathematical activities were very important for the overall cognitive development of children, as well as for their numerical skills. Moreover, the comments of the participants showed that student-teachers had learnt to design adult-directed activities both inside and outside of the classroom. For example,

> *Play outside the classroom must be prepared by teachers. We do not just depend on games available outside the classroom*. F_4

> *In the 'Design and Development of Lessons' module, we studied the circle period in kindergarten. We learnt how to design activities for the circle to prepare children for entering an educational unit.* A_4

Regarding the educational and general preparation modules, the participants believed that they were related to specialist modules and were organised incrementally, that is, with a clear progressive link between the elements of the modules. For example, A_4 stated that: '*the 'Developmental Psychology' module is the basis for the 'Psychology of Games' module. I feel that the 'Principles of Administration' module, the 'School Administration' module, and the 'Kindergarten Administration' module came in sequence and they were useful*'. They believed that all Islamic culture modules (there

were 4 modules during the four years of study) were useful, as their religious beliefs would impact on their approach to teaching children. One student-teacher commented that:

> *Moral values are the same as religious values because positive values in society come from religion. It is important to include a religious aspect in all daily activity at the kindergarten. For example, it is important during the class session to recite the Morning Prayer with the children. Equally as important is to teach the children the prayers said before and after a meal during mealtime.* C_4

Regarding the English Language, it seemed that student-teachers reflected on what was happening in the wider society. Student-teacher A_4 claimed that there was only one English module which was not of a sufficiently high level, and she would like more than one module. She stated: *'we wanted to add more terminology in English from principles, because if we have a lot of vocabulary in English, the research through the web will be easier'*. Student-teacher E_4 agreed with A_4 and she added: '*I want conversational skills for when some talks or discusses something with me*'. Furthermore, it seems that student-teachers were developing skills in planning not just single lessons or activities, but combinations of them into whole units. One student-teacher gave an example of the usefulness of the 'Design and Development of Lessons' module, for the development of her skills in planning educational content:

> *I have gained knowledge about how to prepare a programme for an educational unit. I can design an educational unit for children and I can define the days for this unit. For example, I designed a unit for children learning about the air, which was useful. Through the design units, students learn how they divide the time because some units take one day and some of them two days or more. I have gained knowledge about the teacher's skills in debate and preparation of children for the lesson subject.* G_4

Conversely, E_4 believed that 'The Principles of Statistics' and 'Educational Testing and Evaluating' modules were unnecessary; she said: *'they were equations, math and numbers*'.

Table 9.1 provides a summary of the programme content in the fourth study year from the student-teachers' perspectives (looking at the knowledge they had gained from the specialist modules).

Table 9.1 The programme content in the fourth year

Specialist modules (Theoretical/Practical)	The important areas of the programme content (Student-teachers' knowledge/4th year)
The Child's Counselling and Advising	- stages of growth from childhood to adolescence to old age - how to dominate/manage a classroom through attracting children by stories or chants
Programmes of Preparation for the Pre-School Child	- compensatory programmes for children who cannot enter kindergarten - designing educational unit for kindergarten children - designing programmes for children
Kindergarten Administration	- administrative and leadership qualities of the director - how kindergarten teachers interact with the director - communication and its inhibitors - how to prepare reports, and how to observe - administrative structure in the kindergarten - the records of children and administration
The Child's Psychological Health	- child psychological and defensive tricks taken by children to justify their actions - theories/schools that explain the psychology and health of the child (e.g. the behavioural school, the humanity school, the knowledge school and the analytical school) - the instruments used to deal with the psychological health of the child - how to handle a child who faces psychological problems
Field Practice	- planning/designing and applying activities suitably with children throughout the daily programme in the kindergarten - preparing the equipment and aids for them

Overall, student-teachers 'at the seventh level' were able to see the whole picture rather than just some of the parts (as in the 1st and 2nd years), and their progression and understanding were enhanced by their growing skills and confidence in teaching practice. They were starting to talk about relating theory to practice, and they linked teacher identity with cultural identity and social changes. Through the 'Field Practice' module, it seemed that they had developed their understanding of the kindergarten context and the role of a kindergarten teacher. They observed the teaching and learning of the children in kindergarten for a three-week period and reflected on theories about child development, pedagogical strategies and classroom context. Then they were engaged in their first teaching experience, which was a six-week teaching practice period for 2-3 hours every week. They worked in groups of two and conducted team teaching during this period with university tutors (lecturers)

supervising their learning. Although it seemed that these periods of field experience did not consolidate student-teachers' knowledge and understanding sufficiently, they considered this experience was very important in their preparation. This may be due to the developing understanding of "good" practice and effective strategies for engaging the children. Alternatively, this may have been because they were expected to assume greater independence as novice kindergarten teachers, before undertaking a fourteen-week teaching practice period at the final, eighth, level.

Part Three: Teaching Styles at the University and their Effectiveness

The participants believed that the dialogue and discussion style was useful and interesting, whether discussing subjects with the whole class or in discussion groups, because it allowed them to put forward and discuss their points. B_4 claimed that discussion groups were used extensively in the teaching of specialist modules, and she explained: '*the lecturer gave us many tasks/assignments to do, for instance, how we write aims, then we discuss them*'. One participant commented:

> *The discussion groups are useful because when I lack some knowledge there are students in the group who have this knowledge. Here, there is an exchange of knowledge and ideas between students in the group.* A_4

They asserted that they were able to design activities and present many ideas in workshops which were conducted in small groups. Some of them believed that the workshops were more useful than working alone at home (individual work) because they worked together and there was a team spirit. In addition, lecturers gave them a chance to discuss subjects, for instance, when they discussed designing and publishing children's books.

The participants preferred collaborating with other student-teachers outside lectures (group work) to complete some assignments, because there were exchanges of experiences and the development of friendships between them, as B_4 stated: *'I did not know some students, but through the group I got to know them'.* However, A_4 found it difficult to meet because the times of lectures were different for different student-teachers.

They claimed that one lecturer adopted the approach of reading from a book during the lecture, and they were writing what she said. They believed that they did not

benefit from it because there was no discussion and dialogue in the lectures. So, this style was not effective in their learning. Also, the use of audio-visual aids was limited, as F_4 stated: '*it would be better if there were more, because using them in teaching is very important for the development of knowledge*'.

Part Four: The Teaching/Learning Environment at the University

The content of the modules and lecturers' experiences were positive elements in student-teacher preparation, as G_4 asserted: '*I feel that the modules were enough and their style was simple and not complex, and I feel that most of the lecturers give us their experiences*'.

All student-teachers emphasized the important role of practical application in their training; H_4 claimed that '*I learnt much from practical part of the modules. The lecturers told us what was wrong and what was right. I felt that this was actuality, we were experiencing it'.* They believed that the initial teaching practice was introduced in two ways: through workshops and practical lessons with children who were brought to university. Thus, they saw that this practice helped to prepare them for interacting with and teaching children.

The participants asserted that they had had no personal tutor from the beginning of their university course. However, they stated that there was a lecturer who was responsible for student-teachers (in each specific study year) in the registration period for the semester (just for the study timetable). They claimed that they always contacted the co-ordinator of the Kindergarten Major when faced with a problem. F_4 explained that '*at the beginning of our entry into the Kindergarten Major, we just received from the co-ordinator of the course* a *list of modules, which we were to study through the following four years*'.

However, B_4 claimed: '*I did not feel that there was support provided by the lecturers during the three years of study, except in respect of the addition and deletion of modules when co-ordinating the study timetable*'. A_4 believed that the Kindergarten Major was different from other degree courses, because of the encouragement of student-teachers by some lecturers. For example, she claimed that the lecturers

provided support for them by supplying references and providing guidance and advice.

Significantly, the participants claimed that there was obvious repetition of the content of some modules, and C_4 found this boring. Three of them believed that this repetition was one of the negative characteristics of their preparation, while A_4 claimed that some of the content of the books was difficult to understand. However, it seemed that the lecturers' knowledge and experience played an important role in student-teachers' preparation, as A_4 explained:

> *There were some modules, which we attended where the lectures were very interesting. But when we read the book list from the lecturer for studying for exams, I felt that the contents were difficult to understand... The lecturer's explanation was interesting to the extent that we did not desire to break out of the classroom. But when we were studying for the exam we could not easily study from these books.* A_4

Part Five: Influences on the Educational Process

With regard to student-teachers' beliefs about the major, F_4 stated that her belief before entering was that this major was interesting and the modules were easy, but she felt that it was not as easy as she had expected. She said: *'Many more duties and activities are required. It requires effort, so we always had to work hard and we did not have any free time*'. However, G_4 claimed:

> *Although some modules require hard and fatiguing work between studying, assignments and examinations, I feel that the Kindergarten Major is very interesting and I have happy memories of it. The reasons for the change in my beliefs were the modules and the lecturers*

Thus, the content of the modules and lecturers' experience were factors in changing student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs. They believed that they were discovering knowledge and new experiences every year. B_4 asserted:

> *My knowledge is different from the first year, and it was developing from one term to another. I feel that I am utilizing this knowledge in my life, especially when we have children. For example, my belief was that any game (play) is suitable for children, but now my belief has changed, not any game is suitable for them. The game should have an aim. And not any teacher is appropriate to be a teacher of children*

So, A_4 asserted that they as kindergarten teachers should be proud of their achievements. Two student-teachers believed that there were other factors that qualified them to be kindergarten teachers: E_4 stated:

> *I read and ask questions when I do not understand. I like to ask the lecturers questions regularly and I take on board their criticisms and analysis particularly when I have finished explaining my lesson. I like to implement their recommendations so that I can improve my performance, and also I ask my siblings who have done the same courses before me… I made good use of the class who preceded me, as they have already gone through this course.*

D_4 observed that if a lecturer asked them to prepare activities, she would go and ask the kindergarten teachers, particularly one person who was close to her and worked in this profession. This meant that student-teachers were able to discuss their beliefs and theories, and how these could be applied in practice.

All participants claimed that they kept all the materials from the previous modules, because they saw that each term was linked to the previous term. They believed that they needed these materials and books to refer to them in the teaching practice period, as supporting reference materials.

When asked if there were any difficulties/issues which could impact on their learning/teaching, the comments of the participants showed that three of them claimed that the cost of materials used to design educational activities was high, as B_4 explained: '*the lecturers said that students should use local materials. But if, we used them we needed other tools and equipment with them; for example, cardboard, paper, tape, glue, scissors and colours to help us to design these local materials. So, one activity could cost me 150 SR*'.

Student-teachers suggested creating a kindergarten attached to the college for training student-teachers, which should be typical of the ones they studied. Also, they believed that the classrooms were not appropriate for the practice sessions. So, they believed that there was a need for a special laboratory for student-teachers who were studying the Kindergarten Major, where material, tools and aids were freely available. The majority (six student-teachers) agreed that this laboratory should be available to all student-teachers at any time, where they could work when they had no lectures; they could then exploit the free time between lectures for work. A_4 gave an example to confirm how useful the laboratory would be for them:

I have an idea but I cannot implement it. So, if I go to the laboratory I may meet a student who has experience and skill in design and art, and she is better than me in implement this idea. We can cooperate in the production or implementation of this idea

Summary of the Chapter

Three figures summarise the findings from the interview responses of the participants in the fourth study year/level 7 (see Appendix L, p. 354). They show the interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge, a concept map of key conceptual areas for data analysis in the fourth study year, and the development of student-teachers' knowledge of teaching. The next chapter will present the data analysis of student-teachers at the teaching practice stage.

Chapter Ten: Analysis of Interviews with Student-teachers Undertaking Teaching Practice

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data from the semi-structured interviews with 8 student-teachers (A_{4t}, B_{4t}, C_{4t}, D_{4t}, E_{4t}, F_{4t}, G_{4t}, H_{4t}) during their teaching practice stage. Sixteen questions were introduced to the participants to elicit their knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning in EC, and how their knowledge and beliefs informed their classroom practice. A copy of the interview questions appears in Appendix E (p. 326). The analysis is sorted into nine categories:

- Student-teachers' knowledge of pedagogical content and the kindergarten curriculum in KSA;
- Student-teachers' knowledge of children's learning and development;
- The self-confidence of the student-teachers in the classroom;
- The role of the supervisor, class teacher and the kindergarten's senior management team;
- The ways in which student-teachers developed their pedagogical skills and strategies;
- The ways in which student-teachers improved their teaching practice;
- Student-teachers' interaction during play activities;
- Some of the challenges that student-teachers faced in teaching practice; and
- Suggestions/recommendations that might improve student-teachers' professional preparation.

10.1 Student-teachers' Knowledge of Pedagogical Content and the Kindergarten Curriculum in KSA

When they were asked 'what knowledge do you have of the aims of the KSA kindergarten curriculum?', the majority (seven student-teachers) asserted that they had studied this aspect throughout the programme. However, they believed that they knew them well and used this knowledge in their teaching practice at the kindergarten. Although they mentioned the aims which focus on all aspects of children's growth, most of them believed that the religious aspect was at the core of the aims of the KSA kindergarten curriculum. For example, D_{4t} stated that they, as teachers, should instil religious values in children through stories about the prophets and righteousness, children learning of the Holy Quran and some acts of worship appropriate for their

age. This finding showed the role of KSA culture and religion. There was a link between the educational aims of teaching the kindergarten curriculum in general in KSA with the social and cultural contexts of the children. Religion is central to the people of the Muslim community in all aspects of their life.

These student-teachers asserted that the KSA kindergarten curriculum gave significant attention to all the learning areas (the religious area; the mental intellectual area; the physical and dynamic area; the social area; and the emotional area), as H_{4t} stated: '*all learning areas appear in each activity*' and C_{4t} said: '*we cannot provide any activity without these areas*'. Student-teacher F_{4t} stated that they had learnt about all these learning areas in detail through the modules of the programme, and G_{4t} noted during her teaching practice that it was important that the teacher was qualified to apply these areas of learning. B_{4t} claimed that the teacher should be familiar with these aspects of learning, especially in the activities provided to children.

Student-teacher D_{4t} asserted that there was more focus on religion and the physical/dynamic area in the KSA kindergarten curriculum. She believed that the age of teachers was an influential factor with regard to sharing children's outdoor free-play activities. For example, younger teachers were more active than older teachers, as D_{4t} stated: *'the role of the teacher at the physical activities lesson depends on the age of the teacher herself, in our case some teachers depend on us as trainees to play with children because of either their age or their health issues'*. There was some evidence to support the idea that teachers' beliefs were influenced by what they had gained from their earlier life experiences. This student-teacher reflected what she believed in about playing with children from her culture. Culturally, in KSA, older women feel embarrassed to play physically active games with children in public. They may prefer talking to them rather than playing. This cultural concept may subsequently have a negative impact on the way teachers teach if the student teachers adopt this idea and carry on this practice in their future teaching career.

Student-teacher A_{4t} stated that there were ten educational units in the KSA kindergarten curriculum, and she mentioned that she knew them through her studying on the programme. When she started her teaching practice, she noted:

> *The ministry of education put these units. However, the kindergarten's senior management team defines which units they can began with. This is according to their importance for children. Also this team defines which subjects that should be taught depending on the level of children in Kg1, Kg2 and Kg3.* A_{4t}

This student-teacher (A_{4t}) stated that in this curriculum the teacher should prepare for the educational unit through creating appropriate activities that met the needs of children, and preparing educational aids that were specific to each subject in the unit.

Also, student-teacher F_{4t} stated that self-learning was the best approach for learning in young children, and she thought that the best way to achieve that was through play. As she observed: '*the child is positive participant in his/her learning*'. This student-teacher asserted that self-learning through play was the foundation of the KSA kindergarten curriculum.

10.2 Student-teachers' Knowledge of Children's Learning and Development

Some student-teachers claimed that the programme was effective in training them for their future careers. For example F_{t4} believed that the programme provided her with theoretical and practical knowledge. She stated that the modules of the programme included theoretical knowledge about children's learning and development and its practical application in the kindergarten. Another participant (G_{4t}) observed: '*each module is important, for example some of the modules taught me how to interact with children in case of problem, others showed me how to use the educational aids, and how to prepare my lesson plan'.* Similarly, D_{4t} indicated that '*the programme taught me about the methods of teaching children'.* She believed that the modules included practical applications, such as presenting activities, which helped to prepare them to teach and assess children, In addition, feedback from the lecturer and other student-teachers was also an important part of learning. She, C_{4t}, and D_{4t} claimed, '*this feedback was constructive*'. They (D_{4t} and C_{4t}) developed their pedagogical skills and strategies during their teaching practice.

Table 10.1 provides a summary of student-teachers' understanding of the characteristics of effective practice:

Table 10.1 Student-teachers' understanding of the characteristics of effective practice

Positive strategies (used by student-teachers)
- Making resources
- Involving children (role play)
- Playful and imaginative activities
- Good interaction and communication
- Activities for achieving multiple goals
- Linking between classroom learning and real world needs of the children
- Linking between classroom learning and children's culture and religion
- Using technology as a pedagogical tool
- Using direct experience (hands-on experience)
- Taking into account child's attention during adult-directed activities
- The subjects of activities of the day are related to each other

Student-teachers stated that they used different types of teaching and learning practices with children at kindergarten. For example, A_{4t} believed that the best approach to teaching and learning was direct experience (hands-on experience) by using artefacts and models, because it actively involved children's participation in the educational processes, in collaboration with their teacher. The same student-teacher also believed that stories and chants with the use of slides on the PowerPoint, or the use of puppet theatre helped children to learn effectively. She talked about one of her successful lessons for children in Kg3 in the 'food unit', about '*vegetable soup and writing the number seven'*. This student-teacher believed that the lesson had been very interesting and effective, and the children had been very happy. She used dialogue and discussion strategy with storytelling by using PowerPoint. Then she engaged all children in groups in the activity to prepare this soup, for example, cutting vegetables, and so on. During meal time, children were repeating, as A_{4t} described, '*this is what we made together*' when they were eating. This student-teacher reported that the children learnt the names, colours, and benefits of vegetables. Moreover, they recognized the number '**7**' and were able to match pictures of vegetables to the number through the use of picture cards.

This experience showed that A_{4t} linked classroom learning and the real world needs of the children, and she actively involved children in that activity. She used technology as a pedagogical tool in teaching to achieve her aims for the lesson, within the national curriculum. Hence, this was a good example demonstrating A_{4t}'s more sophisticated pedagogical understanding of choosing appropriate approaches for specific purposes.

Student-teacher C_{4t} stated that she learnt through the programme how to interact with children according to their individuality, solving specific problems they may have and choosing the best teaching practices for young children. However, she claimed that some modules were not effective in the preparation for the teaching practice. For example, when she started her practical teaching she was '*lost and confused*'. She did not know how or where to start. She then stated that her teaching practice was improving compared to her teaching at the beginning. This student-teacher talked about one of her positive experiences in teaching practice in the 'health and safety unit'. She noted, '*I decided to teach children a lesson about 'how to be clean during your trip'. I and my colleague made a cardboard bus and then we hired a child driver for the bus. During the trip we were singing a song until we reached an open area and we started to help each other to unload the bus. Some children opened the floor carpet to sit on, others carried the food basket.* She stated that she used dialogue and discussion strategies in teaching children. As she described, '*we were interacting and communicating beautifully with each other. We noticed that children were very happy and willing to talk and play actively.* This student-teacher believed that the activity achieved multiple goals, such as teaching children how to prepare for their outdoor trip, what things they needed for that trip, what risks they might face, and how to avoid them, and the importance of family or friends.

This experience showed that C_{4t} used playful/imaginative activities; she made resources for her activity with children (for example, the cardboard bus) and she involved children in the role play. She also encouraged children in her activity to engage in interaction and communication with others, which resulted in achieving multiple goals (see Appendix M, p. 357).

E_{4t} talked as well about her positive experience in teaching practice, as she explained '*I had a lesson about gardening. In that lesson I brought a wooden box and inside that box there were some gardening tools. I distributed some planting pots to the children and then I started to ask them about the purpose of each gardening tool*'. She dressed herself to look like a gardener and she involved each child in that activity by asking him/her to get one item out of that box and say its name and shape. She started the planting task with the children step by step, by using the soil and the seeds, as she described, '*I asked each child in turn to put the soil in the pot, then the seeds and then the water*'. This student-teacher believed that lesson was very interesting, and she was happy about that experience because she engaged all the children in the activity, as she illustrated, '*children got very excited when I involved them in the activity'* Furthermore, she claimed that children should be active participants in the activity, especially in the lesson of the circle time, as she stated: *'I seriously considered the focus time of the children as listeners*'. This student-teacher took into account the children's attention in the circle time during adult-directed activity.

This experience showed that E_{4t} used the direct experience strategy in teaching children. She used some useful resources in her activities with children - for example, gardening clothes, gardening tools, soil, seeds, water and pots - and she engaged each child in that activity. She also helped them use their imagination to recognize the type of the character she was talking about and the type of work she/he does. Moreover, there were also other student-teachers who used imaginative activities and involved children in role-play activities to learn about different occupations, for example, doctor, fireman, and traffic warden (see Appendix M, pp. 358-359).

Another student-teacher (H_{4t}) shared her positive experience and noted: '*I linked between the subject of the circle time at the beginning of the day with the activities of the rest of that day*'. For example, she taught children a lesson related to the 'sand unit' in the circle session. Then she prepared some activities in outdoor free-play time by using sand to reinforce learning numbers. She asked each child to pick a number and then used the sand shaping kit to represent each number in the sand. She believed that the activity helped children to reinforce learning numeracy. Also, she gave another example of an activity with children related to 'clothing unit' (see Appendix M, p. 360). She stated that her instruments were samples from some broadcloth fabric (this

specific densely textured woollen fabric with a lustrous finish was purposely used because it is easy for children to handle) with big holes around the edges, some plastic needles, wool thread, glitter, some feathers for the decoration and glue. Children started stitching two pieces of fabric together and then they decorated the cloth they made by using some decorative materials. She noted: '*children were very interested, encouraged and enthusiastic to do the work*'. H_{4t} believed that this kind of activity, which mainly focused on very accurate work, '*helped children to strength their fine motor skills muscles, and increasing the sense of decoration and art and also helped them to appreciate the work of sewing in general*'. This experience showed that H_{4t} linked classroom learning and the real world needs of the children, connecting theory and practice. She practised adult-directed activities and child-initiated activities to help children to develop their gross motor skills and fine motor skills.

Moreover, student-teacher G_{4t} used a dialogue strategy to teach children a lesson about the importance of their hands: '*five fingers of the hand*'. In that lesson, she asked the children to imagine what their life would be like without having any fingers. G_{4t} connected the topic with religion by asking them why God gave us these fingers. In addition, she asked them to see and touch their hands and then get both hands held together. After that she gave each child gloves and asked them to try them on and count his/her fingers by questioning them, how many fingers on your hand? How many on both hands? Although it seemed that the lesson was effective because G_{4t} stimulated children's imagination and their different senses, she believed that the lesson was not successful because she stated that the lesson did not engage children effectively.

It seems that G_{4t} reflected on improving her lesson design to reinforce children's knowledge about the importance of their fingers. Therefore, this same student-teacher (G_{4t}) went through another experience of teaching children the same task in the next lesson. She used a hand-puppet dialogue and sang a song to reinforce the knowledge of the previous lesson. This result revealed that this student-teacher was aware of effective strategies for teaching children. Furthermore, she was also willing to try different strategies to help children to learn, as she reported, *'I used hand-puppets dialogue to teach children the names of the fingers of their hand'*. The dialogue was between the two hands, one hand asking questions about the name of each finger on

the second hand, and the second hand answered the questions by introducing the name of each finger and its function. In that experience the student-teacher linked the names of the fingers with many KSA cultural values. For example, she said, '*I am the index finger and I come after the thumb, and they use me for praying to say the 'Tashahoud', and also I like always being cleaned by cutting my nail*'. In the end she reviewed with the children the name and the purpose of each finger for eating, painting, writing, typing, playing and praying, and then she started to sing with the children a song about the importance of each finger in their life to reinforce that knowledge. According to this student-teacher, the result was excellent, as she noted '*all children were happy and excited and they asked me to repeat that experience again*'. She believed that the song helped the children to remember the name of each finger and know its function before they even went home.

This experience showed that G_{4t} used a dialogue strategy, acting and questioning techniques and children's imagination to teach children the new task. In addition, she linked this new knowledge with the needs and the cultural concepts of the children in their real world, as well as reflecting the role of the KSA culture and religion. As a result, the teaching practice of the pre-service teachers was a very important and essential component for developing their classroom teaching practices.

In contrast, Table 10.2 provides a summary of student-teachers' understanding of the characteristics of less successful activities within their practice.

Table 10.2 Student-teachers' understanding of the characteristics of ineffective practice

Less successful activities (used by student-teachers)
- Not being able to take children on trips to other learning environments - Not planning accurately and misjudging children's capabilities/know where children are in their knowledge and understanding - Not being able to manage children in different contexts, for example, maintaining attention and concentration - Planning the activity above the level of their cognitive capabilities

The findings from four participants indicated that there were some lessons they did not teach well. For example, A_{4t} talked about her negative experience in her teaching practice in the 'health and safety unit'; her lesson was about '*the safety and security in trips*'. Her instruments were some items that could be seen on the beach or found inside the sea - for example, a rug, an umbrella, chairs, a boat, and toys such as swings, and some marine organisms, such as fish and seashells. She used dialogue and discussion strategy, and questioning techniques during circle time to teach children four of the rules of safety and security on trips. For example, she focused on a trip to the seaside (see Appendix M, p. 357). She claimed that the lesson was not successful because, '*if we had a real trip with children to the beach, their daily routine will be changed and they will live a different day of fun and exciting. In addition, each child does not forget what he/she learnt from this trip*'. However, she stated that there were tough decisions from the kindergarten's senior management team not to allow this journey, because they were concerned for the children's safety.

Student-teacher F_{4t} agreed with A_{4t}, about the important role of trips and educational visits in child learning and development. In the circle session, she (F_{4t}) taught children a lesson related to the 'my book unit'. This lesson was about '*kinds of books*'. Some of her instruments were a model of a library and a variety of books. She used dialogue and discussion strategy, and questioning techniques (see Appendix M, p. 361). However, she considered that the lesson was ineffective as she believed that it could be conducted in a better way: '*if we arranged a trip to take children to visit one of libraries, this enables them to realize these types of books*'. This is an example of a student-teacher seeing a contrast between what she believed to be good practice, and what she was observing in the classroom.

Another student (C_{4t}) reflected on her experience of a lesson that she did not teach well, which was about basic colours. She stated that she did not prepare for this lesson well, and it was the worst in her practice, '*because children were aware of these colours. So, I did not find anything to say for them*'. In other words, she was teaching them something they knew already and therefore it was not necessarily the wrong strategy used but the objective that was inappropriate (see Appendix M, p. 362). That lesson could have been planned and taught in a better way: '*through play to install the concept about colours and make the lesson more fun*'. She gave examples of that,

such as images distributed to children and asking each child to choose a colour to paint the image. Then these images would be displayed on the wall, following by a discussion with the children about the colours of each drawing. Moreover, she noted that she could tell children a story which contained the names of colours. At the same time, the children would look for something in the classroom that carried the colour mentioned in a story. This indicated that the student-teacher understood the principle of planning lessons that match the children's level of knowledge and ability. However, on this occasion, she was unable to ascertain this level because of her lack of experience with this group of children.

Student-teacher D_{4t} prepared a physical and dynamic activity during outdoor play time to teach children knowledge about '*useful and non-useful food*'. In that activity relating to the 'food unit', her instruments were: (a) a large piece of cloth divided into 12 squares, each square containing a number (from 1 to 12); and (b) two cubes of medium size, with each side of the cube containing a picture of food, number and arrow. Although D_{4t} stated that she had explained to the children how to apply this activity when they threw these cubes on the cloth to define the kind of food, she felt this activity was not successful and it did not engage children effectively. This was because, she believed, the place where they conducted this activity was in full view of children from other classes, and their attention was distracted by those children. Alternatively, as she observed, '*it could be difficult or above the level of their cognitive thinking*'. The important issue here is that the student-teachers were able to reflect on the less successful activities, to offer reasons for this, and to consider what improvements might be needed for more successful activities.

10.3 The Self-confidence of the Student-teachers in the Classroom

Seven of the student-teachers were confident at the beginning of their teaching practice that they could apply their knowledge and skills to teaching and assessing children in their kindergarten classroom. Nevertheless, E_{4t} stated it was difficult for her to apply her knowledge at the beginning: '*I was hesitant may be for the first month but because of my classroom teacher's encouragement and support, I become more confident*'. She also stated it was very difficult to control 24 children in class because she did not know them well. However, after she was introduced to the

children and knew them better she became more confident in choosing the most effective interactive strategies. For example,

> *While I used to teach, there were two children who used to distract our morning lesson and that was a problem for me. When I started to ask them to sit nearby me, and get their attention by asking them questions, and make them busy distributing some papers for their peers.* E_{4t}

Although D_{4t} and B_{4t} believed that there were difficulties at the beginning of their teaching practice, B_{4t} claimed that she was confident to apply her knowledge in her classroom:

> *I learned a lot from the programme and I feel confident about my ability to practice those activities with children...I do not remember that I had any lesson did not teach well. In case the lesson was not successful, I would try to understand the cause of that failure to sort it out and avoid it.*

Student-teachers C_{4t} and F_{4t} stated that they got their confidence from the knowledge of the programme and its practical applications. This confidence helped F_{4t} to interact effectively with the children. Some skills that F_{4t} learnt from the programme and applied in her practice were, as she described, '*how to make the child more focused to the subject of the lesson through applying interesting and good activities and how to introduce the knowledge to the child in an appropriate time*'. D_{4t} believed that her confidence had increased: '*I faced some problems with some children at the beginning. However, this made me more confident about my skills and ability to interact with children properly'.*

Three student-teachers (A_{4t}, G_{4t}, H_{4t}), believed that they had to be well prepared for their lessons, because as G_{4t} believed, '*I feel unconfident in the classroom if I could not present the lesson from the beginning interestingly*'. Student-teacher A_{4t} believed that her confidence came from two elements, '*of my previous experience when I was doing my practical session on the programme and also from my preparation for the lesson well*'. In addition, another student-teacher (H_{4t}) claimed she felt confident about her knowledge: '*thank god I have confidence on my work'.* She used to gather information about the subject of the lesson in advance, before it was presented to her children. This allowed her to select the best approaches for teaching and learning, and the most suitable educational aids for the age of the children, help her handle any unexpected behaviour of the children, and answer their questions. In addition, she

employed various assessments methods, appropriate for the children. All these strategies helped H_{4t} to feel confident in the classroom. This student-teacher (H_{4t}) stated, '*there were some activities that I could not practice them properly because of some children's behaviour. They were distracting other children's attention*'. However, she sorted that problem out by using praising strategy to improve some children's behaviour - for example, using the magnet board or sticker board and encouraging the child to collect as many stickers and rewards as he/she could. She believed, '*this kind of strategy had a very important role in improve most of children's behaviour*'. This comment of H_{4t} reflected her problem-solving skills.

The findings here demonstrate that student-teachers' confidence in their knowledge and skills to teach and assess children came from several sources:

a. the knowledge of the programme and its practical application - for example, presenting activities as teachers in the university modules;
b. classroom teacher's encouragement and support;
c. getting to know the children better;
d. facing some problems of bad behaviour from children;
e. being well prepared for lessons; and
f. using different kinds of assessment methods appropriate for children.

10.4 The Role of the Supervisor, Class Teacher and the Kindergarten's Senior Management Team

In kindergarten, each student-teacher was supported by a university visiting supervisor (lecturer). All supervisors provided student-teachers with a highly structured Trainee Student Tracking Form (TSTF), which is produced by the COE at the university. As A_{4t} stated, '*our supervisor provided us TSTF to be aware for all aspects of our assessment in our teaching practice*'. Each supervisor used the TSTF with student-teachers as a means of reflection on progress, areas of difficulty, et cetera. A copy of the TSTF appears in Appendix N (p. 363). Student-teachers used the TSTF to set general and individual targets (based on their learning needs), and to record the achievements of the required targets for the TSTF. Student-teachers were able to discuss their progress and any problems they were experiencing with their supervisors. In addition, there were three forms to assess student-teachers at the end of their teaching practice. One of them was used by the supervisor, the second by the

classroom teacher and the third by the kindergarten's headteacher. Copies of these forms appear in Appendix O (pp. 364-366). Student-teachers B_{4t}, E_{4t} and H_{4t} noted that they were aware of the content of the form which belonged to the supervisor, but the forms which belonged to the headteacher or class teacher, as H_{4t} described, '*we did not realize them*'.

Some student-teachers (B_{4t}, F_{4t}, and H_{4t}) considered that their supervisors supported their development during their teaching practices; B_{4t} explained that *'there was a good support from our supervisor. She used to evaluate our teaching in a daily basis and provide us with her constructive feedback'*. This student-teacher believed that her teaching skills, as she noted, '*were always improving'*. In contrast, she and F_{4t} believed that their classroom teachers were not helpful and supportive. For example, B_{4t} stated, *'I wished that she shared her experience with me'*. In contrast, student-teacher G_{4t} stated that her classroom teacher was efficient in her work, and she claimed that classroom teachers shared their knowledge and experiences with the trainees. As she said, '*they helped us to produce aids and ideas appropriate for working with children. In addition, they provided us some appropriate and effective methods for interacting with children*'.

Student-teacher H_{4t} noted that their supervisor always followed their work and drew their attention to the issues that she felt needed improvement. H_{4t} described, '*in our new teaching day, she used to go through her previous notices on the TSTF of each student-teacher and double check that we improve our practice*'. She reported that her classroom teacher gave her the freedom to interact with the children and manage her classroom without any restrictions, unlike some other class teachers in relation to their student-teachers.

On the other hand, student-teachers A_{4t}, C_{4t}, D_{4t}, E_{4t} and G_{4t} considered that their supervisors did not support their development in teaching practice. For example, C_{4t} believed that her supervisor was not effective in her work. She was not given any kind of feedback by her supervisor, or helped to improve her teaching. However, her classroom teacher was very helpful and supportive and C_{4t} tried to follow her way of teaching. For example, she used the teacher's methods of reading a story to the children and asking them about the events of that story and then writing these points

on the board clearly, highlighting the new targeted letter to allow children to recognize it. When her supervisor visited her class, she was surprised that she was using reading and writing processes in her teaching practice. Her supervisor told her that children do not have the ability to read and write. However, these literacy practices had been modelled for the student-teacher by the class teacher. This finding showed that the knowledge of the supervisor about children's learning seemed to support Piaget's child development theory. However, the student-teacher was following the practice of the class teacher and this practical knowledge became more important for her than the theories of child development she had learned in her modules.

More than half of the participants (A_{4t}, C_{4t}, D_{4t}, E_{4t}, and F_{4t}) considered that the kindergarten's senior management team was a barrier in their teaching practice: C_{4t} pointed out that '*they used to impose some restrictions*', and D_{4t} claimed: '*their dealing with us was very bad*'. Student-teacher A_{4t} believed that the kindergarten's headteacher was reluctant to accept any change, and she stated that the headteacher was repeating to them, as A_{4t} described, '*what you have learned is one thing and reality is something else*'. She therefore suggested that in order to improve her teaching practice, the kindergarten's senior management team should take into account the changes that the trainee teacher was introducing. Furthermore, F_{4t} noted that the kindergarten's senior management team was preventing them from using the workshop and its tools. According to this trainee, this was because, as the headteacher reportedly said: '*it is only available for the use of the staff of the kindergarten*'. However, H_{4t} stated: '*the kindergarten's senior management team provided us some experiences and administrative skills for working in kindergarten*'. These findings showed that the supervisor, class teacher, and the kindergarten's senior management team had an impact on forming teacher identity in classroom teaching practice.

Moreover, student-teachers E_{4t} and D_{4t} stated that the kindergarten's senior management team requested the trainees to produce educational aids for the kindergarten. They believed that it was a source of concern which impacted on their interaction with children. E_{4t} believed that it was not fair on the part of this team to demand this during their teaching practice stage. This finding showed that student-teachers' beliefs about the kindergarten's senior management team may have been

influenced either by the lack of knowledge of the terms of their assessment form which was used by the headteacher, or may have reflected the lack of communication between the supervisor and the trainee. This is because if the trainees had known clearly about these terms, they would have respected what the headteacher requested from them.

In summary, some of the student-teachers experienced what could be described as an apprenticeship model of teaching and/or a reflective practice model of teaching, because they were receiving good support and feedback during their practice from the class teacher and/or the university supervisor. However, this was not consistent across all the student-teachers' experience.

10.5 The Ways in Which Student-teachers Developed their Pedagogical Skills and Strategies

Student-teachers A_{4t}, E_{4t} and F_{4t} considered that the daily interaction with children led to, as A_{4t} described, '*the development of my performance to teach*'. According to B_{4t}, her development was informed by *'my supervisor's feedback and I was trying to use different types of teaching practices'*. This was also asserted by F_{4t} and G_{4t}, who stated that they used different teaching strategies and as a result noticed that some of these strategies worked better than others and were more successful in attracting children's attention. For example, as F_{4t} described, '*using a story telling, or acting strategies and head projector in the classroom attract children's attention more and encourage interactions*'. This reflected the point of view of H_{4t} who claimed, '*since the beginning, I was looking for the best ways to work with children. Each lesson has a different way from the other to present according to the content of the lesson*'. This is evidence that she was trying out and reflecting on the effectiveness of techniques from the start, and this may well have led to an improvement in her performance.

Student-teacher C_{4t} believed that the encouragement and guidance of her class teacher, and the freedom given to her to interact with children and manage the classroom helped her to develop her teaching practice. She stated that every day she was gaining new methods and different strategies to interact with children, and as she mentioned *'we felt more comfortable in kindergarten's environment'.*

A tentative conclusion from these findings can be made that student-teachers' development in the teaching practice comes from several sources: (a) the daily interaction with children; (b) supervisor's feedback; (c) the encouragement and guidance of the class teacher; (d) the use of different teaching strategies; (e) the freedom given to a trainee to interact with children or manage the classroom; and (f) positive feeling towards the kindergarten environment.

10.6 The Ways in Which Student-teachers Improved their Teaching Practice

Half of the participants (B_{4t}, C_{4t}, D_{4t}, E_{4t}) agreed that support from supervisors, classroom teachers, and kindergarten's senior management team helped to improve their teaching practice. Student-teacher H_{4t} claimed that the student-teachers would need to liaise with the children's families in order to improve the educational outcome for the child. She believed that close cooperation between the family of the child and the kindergarten would help both parties to sort any child's problems that may arise, and result in a better teaching and learning environment in the classroom. Also, this student-teacher (H_{4t}) believed that '*the number of the children in each classroom should be reduced maximum to 15 only*' to enable her teaching practice to improve. Moreover, she stated that they needed to have some new equipment like, for example, an overhead projector in each classroom.

Although A_{4t} stated that she knew the educational units in the KSA kindergarten curriculum through her study on the programme, she preferred to be briefed, in the pre-teaching practice meeting, about the textbooks which would be taught in the KSA kindergarten curriculum. This was important to ensure that she was knowledgeable about these books and ready to teach them. She believed that this would improve her teaching practice.

The findings here showed that student-teachers drew on a range of sources to improve their teaching. These included, among other elements, the following: (a) supervisor's constructive feedback; (b) the guidance of the class teacher; (c) the flexibility of the kindergarten's senior management team and the availability of facilities that help student-teachers to teach; (d) co-operation from the children's families; and (e) the number of children being appropriate of the size of the class.

10.7 Student-teachers' Interaction during Play Activities

Student-teachers stated their styles and approaches in their interaction with children, as B_{4t} noted: '*I used to play and interact with the children and share their group activities*'. And H_{4t} stated that a teacher needed to share with children their play activities. For example, as she noted, '*when I shared children their play with the sand, this stimulated them and helped them to be more creative*'. Furthermore, F_{4t} claimed that if a kindergarten teacher wants the children to interact effectively with her, she needs sometimes to behave like them, for example, play, sing a song and act. Student-teacher H_{4t} gave an example of her interactions with children when they were playing in group activities, as was the case when they worked in the corners' activities. There were many corners with different activities, she explained:

> *I walk around corners and share children their play activities, for example, I take a role in the corner of the imaginative activities, or I go to reading corner to read a story with them and help them raise some discussion about some picture, and then I go to the block corner to help them build some shapes and so on.* H_{4t}

Student-teacher H_{4t} believed that when she was transferring from one group activity to another, this usually helped children (in a previous group) to interact and co-operate with each other better in their activity, without her intervention. Student-teacher C_{4t} agreed with H_{4t}, saying, '*I manage my time to move between all groups, and then I give the freedom for children to follow-up their play with each other in their group*'. She stated that her interaction with children varied during whole class:, '*I used to play with them for a while and then I observe them and encourage them for the while*'. While A_{4t} used to give each child a role to play, and encouraged speech and free expression during whole class activities, she also stated that the children needed to learn the class rules for each activity, '*to respect the systems and regulations*'. For example, in the morning in circle time, she used to repeat with children the circle's rules to be applied by them. A similar procedure was undertaken for outdoor free-play time.

As a result of this interaction with the children, all participants used to follow up the effectiveness of their teaching practices by evaluating the outcome of the tasks for the children at the end of each activity. Student-teacher H_{4t} stated that she used to assess her teaching practice whether she achieved the aims of the lesson or not according to

the level of engagement and the reactions of the children. Also, E_{4t} stated that she asked the class teacher about her performance in the classroom. Student-teachers B_{4t}, C_{4t}, and F_{4t} asserted that in case they found that some children did not learn, they tried to repeat and reinforce that knowledge again in their new activities session.

10.8 Some of the Challenges that Student-teachers Faced in Teaching Practice

Student-teacher G_{4t} considered that the large number of children in the classroom was a challenge in her teaching practice. She found it difficult to interact with children or practise some activities with them. Also, she claimed that some subjects were hard to fit into the teaching units during her teaching practice: '*we could not make them effective or appropriate for children*'. While H_{4t} stated that her challenge was, '*behavioural problems when they get together in one child*'. So, D_{4t} believed that patience with children was the big challenge in her teaching, as she noted, '*kindergarten field requires highly the patience of the teacher with children, and her interacting with them is gently*'.

On the other hand, student-teachers A_{4t}, C_{4t}, D_{4t} and E_{4t} found that the main challenge in their teaching practice was with the kindergarten's senior management team. For example, A_{4t} noted that this team did not accept any change from them as trainees. E_{4t} claimed that they as trainee teachers were burdened with a lot of work from the senior management team, but she was working hard and, '*determined to prove for them my ability as a teacher*'. Regarding the class teacher, B_{4t} stated that her challenge was how to make her class teacher accept her as a trainee teacher. C_{4t} claimed that her supervisor was partly non-professional because she did not provide her with constructive feedback. Moreover, the facilities at a kindergarten played an important role in student-teachers' teaching practice because A_{4t} believed that was a challenge for her practice, as she described, '*the lack of clean sand for children play and some outdoor tools were opened to the sun*'. All these comments do show the constraints on the student-teachers, but they also may be evidence of the student-teachers' idealistic views that perhaps might be changed by the realities of working everyday, once qualified.

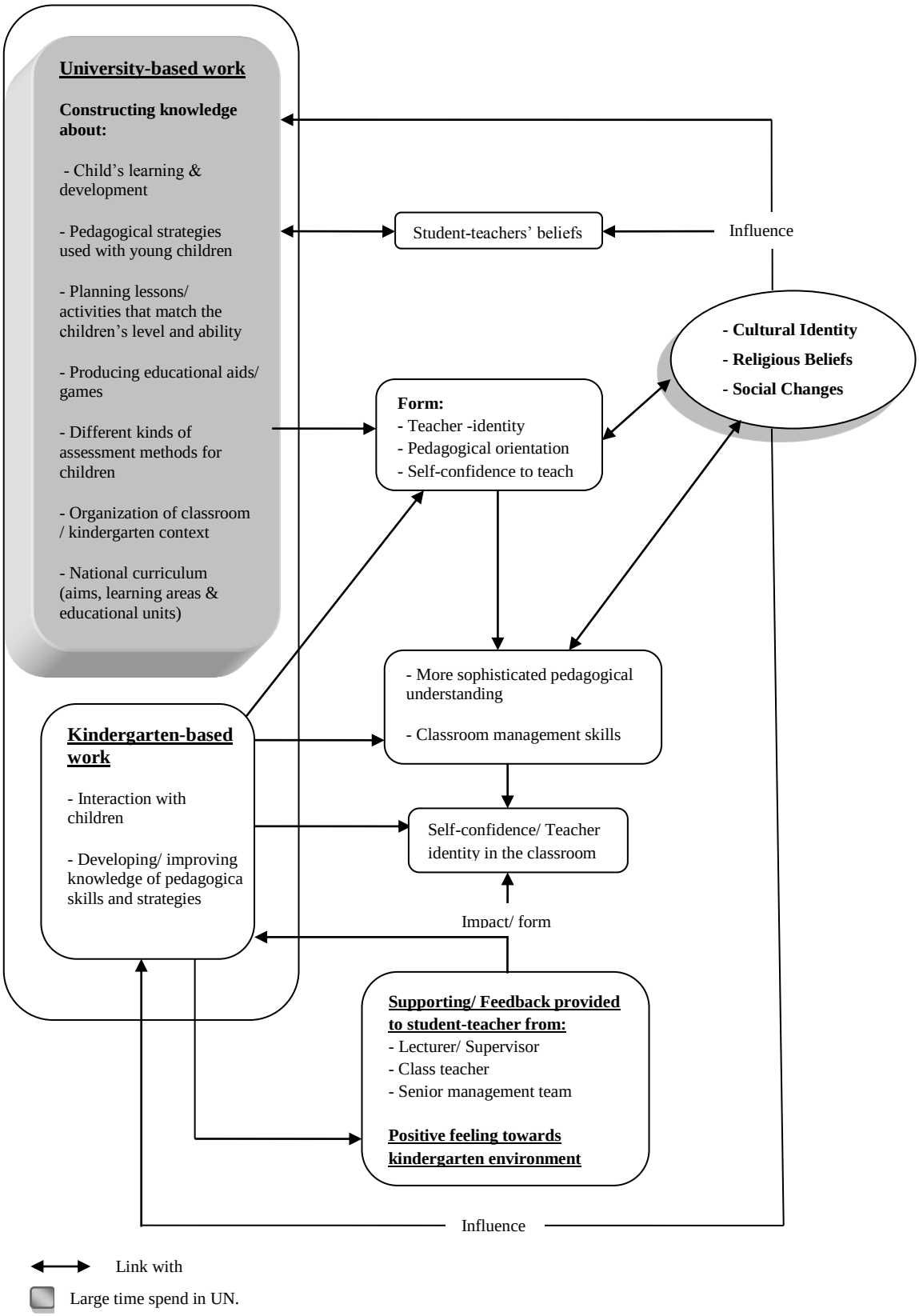
10.9 Suggestions/Recommendations that Might Improve Student-teachers' Professional Preparation

Although A_{4t}, B_{4t}, E_{4t}, F_{4t} and H_{4t} stated that the period of the teaching practice at kindergarten (12 weeks) consolidated their knowledge and understanding, most of them (A_{4t}, B_{4t}, E_{4t}, and H_{4t}) claimed that they needed to know more about the KSA kindergarten curriculum through the content taught at the university. In contrast, student-teachers D_{4t}, F_{4t} and G_{4t} believed that the content of the programme was effective, with G_{4t} commenting that: '*mostly, the content covers all aspects relevant to early childhood*'. And D_{4t} noted, '*I learnt adequately, but I should develop myself by myself and this does not prevent to ask help from others*'. However, F_{4t} claimed that there was a need to reinforce more the practical side of the content of the programme.

Student-teacher E_{4t} stated that for the theoretical side to be effective, they should make frequent visits to a kindergarten. So, student-teachers B_{4t}, C_{4t} and F_{4t} suggested having a kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers over the four year programme; as C_{4t} argued, '*it is necessary because I see this kindergarten in the same way as chemistry or biology laboratories for practice*'. H_{4t} stated that they as student-teachers at kindergarten level needed to have a sports Gym (hall) to help them exercise and to be more fit because, as she noted, '*of our work nature*'.

The findings from the analysis of the data from the semi-structured interviews with student-teachers in teaching practice are presented in Figure 10.1 as a concept map of key conceptual areas.

Figure 10.1 Concept map of key conceptual areas from the data analysis of responses of student-teachers in teaching practice as a summary of their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers



Summary of the Chapter

Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 have provided an analysis of the interviews with student-teachers in each study year separately, followed by a summary of the findings for each one to demonstrate the interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge, how their knowledge of teaching was structured, and how their knowledge and beliefs developed over a four-year programme. This chapter has provided an analysis of interviews with student-teachers regarding their teaching practice, in order to understand how the programme content prepared them to become kindergarten teachers, and how it was concordant with the pre-school curriculum in KSA. The interviews provided evidence of the characteristics of both effective and ineffective practice, and supported the view that there are other elements/factors alongside the programme content which impact/influence on IT preparation. The following chapter will discuss the key findings of student-teachers' questionnaire and interviews.

Chapter Eleven: Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

The main quantitative and qualitative findings of the current study will be combined and discussed in light of the previous literature, and in the context of teacher preparation in KSA. The data provided evidence that the socio-cultural context in KSA could be used as a framework for understanding student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs. Socio-cultural theory is therefore used as a theoretical framework for the study in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1- What are the perspectives of student-teachers regarding the training of kindergarten teachers in the COE at a University?
2- How does the programme content prepare student-teachers to become kindergarten teachers according to the perspective of the student-teachers?
3- What are the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers? And how do their knowledge and beliefs develop over a four-year programme?

The main findings related to each research question are identified and discussed, along with the main conceptual issues that arise from these findings. As shown in Appendices (I, J, K and L, pp. 345-356), concept maps emerged to illustrate the key conceptual areas from data analysis as a summary for understanding student-teachers' professional preparation as kindergarten teachers over the four year programme. These concept maps will be used as organising conceptual frameworks to discuss the overall findings of the study.

It was argued that "teachers' beliefs should be studied within the cultural framework in which they work" (Mansour, 2008c, p. 117). Gahin (2001), Fang (1996), Calderhead (1996), Pajares (1992), Barnes (1992), Hamilton and Richardson (1995), and Olson (1988) argued in their studies that researchers cannot examine teachers' beliefs and practices out of their contexts. In this sense, Olson (1988, p. 69) asserted that "what teachers tell us about their practice is, most fundamentally, a reflection of their culture and cannot be properly understood without reference to the culture". Similarly, Calderhead (1996) asserted that in order to have a better understanding of

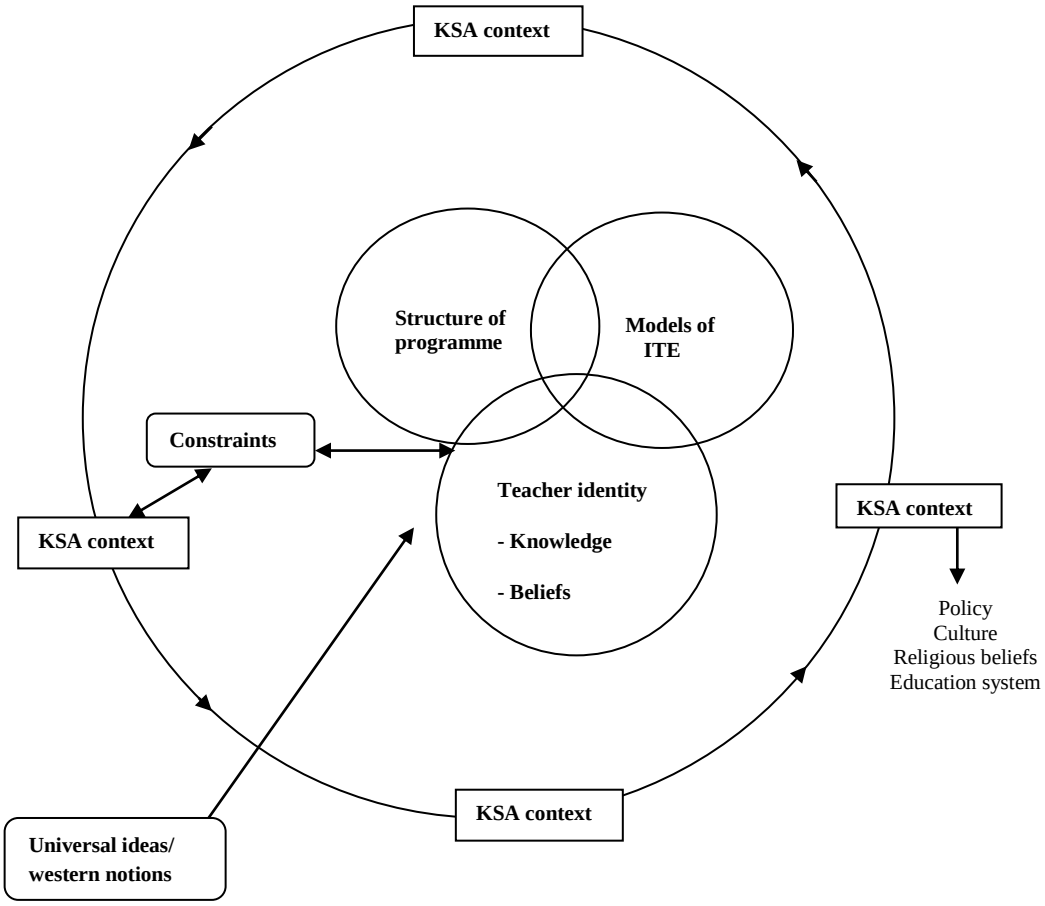
how learning and teaching occur in classrooms, the researcher should take into account the context in which teachers' beliefs develop and are used.

Thus, socio-cultural theory is an appropriate theoretical framework to discuss the findings of this study, because student-teachers were learning in a particular social and cultural context within KSA as an Islamic country. Their knowledge was co-constructed with others in the university and kindergarten contexts. And their knowledge and beliefs were influenced by their own social and cultural contexts of development. They built a teacher identity that was consistent with wider social-cultural expectations of their roles in society. Moreover, these student-teachers learnt educational theories about children's learning and development from other cultures. However, they were transmitting the society's dominant values and beliefs to children during their teaching practice, with the application of ECE principles which they learnt from these educational theories. In this respect, Yamani (2000, p.115) asserted that "Islam remains the fundamental frame of reference for the personal and collective identity of all Saudi Arabians". Moreover, she explained:

> *Islamic discourse at a cultural level is an instrument with which to regain identity and assimilate a kind of modernity that would otherwise be alienating* (Yamani, 2000, p. 115).

A model (Figure 11.1) has emerged from interpreting the findings from the analysis of data from 32 student-teachers. This model illustrates how student-teachers were prepared to become teachers in the field of ECE in the unique context of KSA.

Figure 11.1 Model illustrating how student-teachers were prepared to become teachers in the unique context of KSA



There are five key themes/conceptual areas in the discussion chapter that have arisen from the data, and they are based around the research questions. To that end, this chapter is divided into five sections as follows:

Section 1: Knowledge and Beliefs

1.1 Structure and development of the knowledge and beliefs of student-teachers

1.1.1 University-based work

1.1.1.1 Building knowledge of teaching (theory-practice)

(a) Content knowledge: knowledge about children's learning and development theories

(b) Pedagogical content knowledge: teaching and learning strategies used with young children

1.1.2 Kindergarten-based work

Section 2: Models of Initial Teacher Education

2. 1 The cultural transmission model

2. 2 The cumulative model

2. 3 The reflective practice model

2. 4 The apprenticeship model

Section 3: Communities of Practice

Section 4: Teacher Identity

4.1 Image of the subject and teacher identity

4.2 Cultural identity and teacher identity

4.3 Religious beliefs and teacher identity

4.4 Social change and teacher identity

Section 5: Constraints Affecting Student-teachers' Learning and Teaching

5.1 Constraints related to the university context

5.2 Constraints related to the kindergarten context

5.3 Constraints related to the socio-cultural context

Section 1: Knowledge and Beliefs

1.1 Structure and development of the knowledge and beliefs of student-teachers

The findings of the current study revealed that student-teachers' beliefs and their knowledge cannot be separated from each other. Student-teachers did not talk about their knowledge and beliefs separately. Their beliefs/knowledge interacted with and affected their knowledge/beliefs. Mansour (2008a) agrees with this finding that there is a relationship between knowledge and beliefs. He found that "beliefs controlled the gaining of knowledge and knowledge influenced beliefs" (Mansour, 2008a, p.1626). Wray also found that developments in student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs "had been consonant with one another" (Wray, 1993, p. 72). Similarly, Thomas, Pedersen and Finson (2001) found that student-teachers' educational beliefs play a very important role in the gaining of knowledge and the interpretation of teaching behaviour. In this sense, this study is consistent with Shulman (1987) and Richardson (1996), who illustrated that formal knowledge about teaching and learning/content knowledge make up one of the sources of teachers' beliefs.

Student-teachers' knowledge developed, improved and deepened over time. This study is consistent with a study that was conducted in Singapore on the development of student-teachers' MPCK, which argued that the development and improvement of student-teachers' knowledge during their preparation programme was affected by both specialised subject modules and generic education modules, "as well as the first teaching practice experience" (Lim-Teo, Chua, Cheang and Yeo, 2007, p. 243).

Although student-teachers' knowledge was changed as a result of their learning, some of their beliefs about ECE in general seemed to remain stable over time during the period of the university-based work. These beliefs were informed by the curriculum guidance for ECE, and other theoretical influences. However, it might be discussed, why this new knowledge did not change student-teachers' underlying beliefs. This could be because student-teachers adopted these beliefs from others who were more influential than them in the field of ECE. In this respect, Pajares (1992) and Deering (1997) found that changing student-teachers' beliefs is a slow process because it is difficult to change belief systems which have already been formed from their life experiences. Similarly, Dunne (2003), who conducted his research on student-teachers' general beliefs about teaching and learning, found that a little change in student-teachers' beliefs was apparent, and this change was related to practice. Therefore, the researcher could see that student-teachers' experiences and beliefs need to be taken into account when introducing new educational concepts or pedagogies. If this is the case, there are implications for the approaches used by university lecturers to elicit and discuss these beliefs. This agrees with the argument of Mansour (2008a, p. 1629) that it is better in TE programmes to move toward a "conceptual change" approach.

This programme prepared student-teachers to teach the KSA kindergarten curriculum in two strands: university-based work and kindergarten-based work. However, student-teachers spent the majority of their time at the university. These student-teachers had opportunities to "try out" activities within their groups, or with children in their own families. However, opportunities for them to practise as teachers, in an authentic context, were limited to the teaching practice in the fourth year. One of the key findings was that student-teachers needed more visits to kindergarten during their four study years, because they wanted more practice experience at kindergarten. This supports Cheng's perspective (2005) that student-teachers should have regular visits

to a variety of schools to develop gradually their understanding of the school context and their role as teachers. Also, it supports many arguments by authors such as Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt (2001), LaBoskey and Richert (2002), Clark (2002), Krecic and Ivanus Grmek (2008) and Moswela (2006), who claim that learning through field experience is a major element in teacher development programmes. As Moswela (2006) found in his study, teachers' learning should be based on the actual problems which they encounter in the classroom. Therefore, the ITE programmes should include a practical element in an authentic context throughout the programme, that is, from the first year onwards.

It is argued that EC student-teachers' content knowledge comes predominantly from taught modules at university through '*university-based work*', while their understanding of teaching children (pedagogical knowledge) comes predominantly from the field of teaching practice in an authentic context, or '*kindergarten-based work*'. Therefore, the current structure of the programme prevents PCK from developing in efficient ways. This happens although it was proposed that PCK "underpins all other forms of knowledge required to teach effectively" (Martin, 2005, p. 54). Also, the knowledge student-teachers were gaining during the first three years remained inert and it was only when they went into kindergarten that it became used in the sense that it was applied to the reality of practice. There is research, for example, that carried out by Freire (1972, 1998) and Vygotsky (1978), that suggests that knowledge only becomes an integral part of the knower when it is used in a real context,. In this study, this was evident when the students engaged in their fourth year's teaching practice.

1.1.1 University-based work

The findings showed that student-teachers from the beginning were aware of what they did not know, and what they needed to know. This was evident through the analysis of their interviews and questionnaires. Mostly, the mean scores from the questionnaire statements regarding their knowledge of children's learning and development, and of pedagogical content, were mainly more than (4) of the five points of the scale. This suggests that student-teachers agree or strongly agree that they should know about these statements which were related to children's learning and development, and pedagogical content. In addition, the interviews revealed that

the informal interaction between student-teachers and others, whether before or after their joining the programme, was one of the factors which shaped their awareness of what they did not know, and what they needed to know. For example, these others included friends, student-teachers, and relatives who were studying in the kindergarten programme or worked in the field of ECE. This means that they were drawing on 'more knowledgeable others' to support their learning and development, and were not entirely reliant on the university-based content. So, might they have formed some of their beliefs under the influence of these 'others'?

Student-teachers learnt about different areas of professional knowledge. However, student-teachers in the first study year were not aware of how to bring their knowledge together, and they did not see the importance of some areas of knowledge in their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers. For example, F_1 believed that there was no need to learn about SEN (see p. 170). However, acquiring new knowledge helped to change some prior beliefs from year one. Student-teachers in other years were aware that they should know about children with SEN and the range of strategies for working with them. They believed that these children must be integrated into society and they understood that these children were integrated in regular kindergartens. According to the objectives of education policy in KSA, the education of gifted and disabled children is considered part of the core of the educational system. This reflects the practice in KSA of moving towards inclusion, where some children with SEN who were formerly in special schools are now in mainstream schools. Thus, these student-teachers understood that the practice of inclusion is now more common in kindergarten and saw the relevance of a high level of information about SEN. This shows how national policies have to be reflected in teacher preparation programmes. This is to ensure that the beliefs of the student-teachers are consistent with recent policy developments regarding inclusion.

1.1.1.1 Building knowledge of teaching (theory-practice)

Student-teachers' knowledge in the first study year was fragmented. Then, in the second year their knowledge was beginning to cohere and expand. Over time, there was consolidation and awareness of what they knew. However, making theory-practice links was still not situated in a practical context until the end of the third year.

In the university context, student-teachers had modules which included knowledge about children's learning and development, including producing educational aids/games, and knowledge about pedagogical strategies used with young children, as well as knowledge about how to plan for activities, including play. Moreover, knowledge about the educational context in the kindergarten was emphasised, with less time being given to cover all the core (The Self-Learning Curriculum) and the educational units of the national KSA curriculum. It is assumed that student-teachers will gain this knowledge during their teaching practice (about 12 weeks in the last term of their four year programme). However, although time is an important element of ITE programmes, there should be sufficient time to ensure that student-teachers have understood the national curriculum. It was evidenced through the data that student-teachers needed to know about the core and the educational units of the national KSA curriculum from the first year onwards. Bennett (1993) and Bennett (2003) illustrated that there should be sufficient time where student-teachers learn about the subjects that they will teach, the curriculum, learners and assessment, because this will ensure that they work with their pupils confidently.

These student-teachers built and developed their content knowledge (what to teach), and their procedural/pedagogical knowledge (how to teach) - which was related to the early years - and their conceptual knowledge (why to teach). These three areas were all related in that student-teachers should understand what they do, how they do it, and why they do what they do. In the first study year, student-teachers were not able to relate their content knowledge to pedagogical and conceptual knowledge. However, acquiring knowledge of pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children during the second year played an important role in linking content knowledge with pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, the practical application (workshops) for the modules, including carrying out some activities such as practice lessons in the class at the university, helped to some extent in this linking and enabled student-teachers to teach each other (peer teaching).

The findings indicated that student-teachers at the end of the third year were demonstrating how they were building their conceptual knowledge about pedagogy and learning in EC to relate content knowledge to pedagogical knowledge. However, the real link between these three aspects of knowledge were enhanced through

student-teachers' teaching practice in an authentic context. In this respect, this finding is consistent with Cheng's study of the programme of education (primary) of the four-year, full-time Bachelor of Education course (2005); Cheng argued that the field experience had helped the student-teachers to obtain a better understanding about the role of a teacher, and their competence developed in different ways during their teaching practice period. Similarly, Shulman (1987) and Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) claimed that classroom teaching practices develop student-teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, while disciplinary knowledge in the ITE programmes develops curricular and subject matter knowledge among student-teachers. In this respect, the researcher will show what the knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten student-teachers are regarding:

(a) Content knowledge: knowledge about children's learning and development theories

There was evidence of the integration of wider beliefs and theories about children's learning and development from other cultures, including western influences on educational theories and practices in the programme. Student-teachers' beliefs were being influenced by the dominant educational theories that were used in the programme. For example, Piaget was the main theorist regarding play, learning and development, and the student-teachers seemed to be developing Piagetian ideas about readiness for learning, and appropriate types of activities. However, these theories are now somewhat dated in light of contemporary theories about child development and what knowledge bases are appropriate for beginning teachers (Palmer, 2001; Reginensi, 2004).

It was evident from the literature review that western educators have moved away from Piagetian theories in the last 20 years and towards more Vygotskian/post-Vygotskian ideas which emphasize the role of the culture and social interactions in developing children's knowledge and aptitudes. Vygotsky did not limit children's learning and development to age-related stages as Piaget, who claimed that each stage should be accomplished before the next stage could happen, did. That is, children build cognitive structures during specific age periods, and these become the basis for the development and re-organisation of new knowledge and understanding (Hsueh, 2005). Piaget's theories have been adapted in ways that imply an emphasis on the

child's own discovery and exploration through play and self-initiated activities (Boden, 1994; Vidal, 1994). This leads to readiness for more formal concepts and more sophisticated cognitive structures. In contrast, Vygotsky claimed that the child's cultural background, context and social interactions with children and adults are important factors that influence stages of development and children's learning (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev and Miller, 2003; Harry, 2001; Moll, 1990). Although the theories of Piaget and Vygotksy are not in opposition, it is Piaget's work that continues to influence the theories of child development that are taught in Saudi Arabia. This poses an interesting question about whether Piaget's theories retain their importance because they are aligned with Islamic beliefs and teachings about young children in society. In addition to Vygotsky's theories about children's learning, there are scholars of Islamic theories which appear to be different from Piaget's theories in some respects, but not contradictory. These theories are mainly based on Islamic education, which encourages teachers, parents and guardians to develop children's intellectual abilities, creativity and knowledge in general (Al-Qaradawi, 2004; Omar, 2005; Abu-Mgle, 2001; Btanya, 2006). For example, Al-Ghazali, pointed to (a) the importance of education at a young age; (b) the need to play, that is giving the child a chance to play during learning; (c) teaching being gradually introduced during child's learning; (d) treating children kindly; and (e) taking into account individual differences among children (Dahkallah, 1996). Al-Ghazali also emphasized in his approach to children's learning the complementary development of the mental, physical and spiritual aspects of children (Dahkallah, 1996).

Islam believes that children have the ability to learn and develop their learning without any restrictions or limitations of time or age (Btanya, 2006; Samadi and Marwa, 2006). For example, at each age there are talented or gifted learners whereas Piaget conceptualised children's development in stages according to their ages. Piaget proposed that children's ability and aptitude develop according to their age (Boden, 1994), which is in opposition to the main concept of building and developing the Islamic person. Education in Islam is based on developing the cognitive, spiritual, behavioural, physical, and social domains of each individual (Btanya, 2006; Omar, 2005; Al-Qaradawi, 2004; Abu-Mgle, 2001). Islam does not limit children's cognitive and mental development to stages and time as Piaget did (Al-Qaradawi, 2004; Zghul, 2003; Mansour, 2001). However, it is possible to offer an explanation of why Piaget's

ideas were taken up and why they are still used in KSA teacher-education programmes. This may be because he provided knowledge for understanding the cognitive development of the child and he advocated creating an environment with experiences which help to promote child development (Boden, 1994; Vidal, 1994; Zghul, 2003; Mansour, 2001). An additional explanation is perhaps because Islam takes into account the children's age when they start religious practices and worship, such as prayer and fasting, which are dependent on their maturity (Al-Qaradawi, 2004). Therefore, this concept links to Piaget's concept of 'readiness'. Thus, the researcher could see that some education theories related to children's learning and development that are used in TE programmes are seen as being acceptable because they may resonate with Islamic religious beliefs about childhood. This explanation reinforces the point that teacher education needs to be understood in the socio-cultural and historical contexts in which it is situated (Linde, 2003). Some applications of Piagetian theory in the KSA context within the field of ECE in relation to Islamic views can be seen in the following areas, which have been synthesised from the work of Ktami (2009):

(a) using visual aids/tools as much as possible when dealing with children;

(b) providing opportunities in the field of dramatic play/role play;

(c) ensuring that verbal instructions given to children are short and clarified in action or by using drawings in order to make them understandable;

(d) organizing activities which enable children to interact with each other, and which encourage them to use vocabulary to describe what they see and hear in order to build a basis for the concepts of learning and language;

(e) taking into account the different levels of children's thinking, and increasing the level of difficulty of the skills provided for them gradually;

(f) avoiding ridicule or criticism in the case of incorrect responses, and, rather, identifying the source and correcting it in an appropriate manner;

(g) providing activities that require the use of the senses to build expertise; and

(h) helping children make the transition from physical thinking to abstract thinking, which includes solving problems and thinking about possible options (Ktami, 2009).

It might be useful here to indicate that there were other educational theories and trends alongside Piagetian theory, which were influential in the programme. Student-teachers were exposed to such western educational theories and trends as, for example, Froebel (1782- 1852s) and his ideas about play and activity, Montessori (1870-1952s) and her methods of teaching to develop children's skills, Vygotsky (1896- 1934s) and the formation of concepts, and Galperin's (1902- 1988s) ideas about the development of mental processes (COE, 2004). Furthermore, they were exposed to education methods in Islamic thought, methods which are also adopted in other Arab and Islamic countries within the Middle East such as Egypt (Ibid, 2004). Examples of scholars of Islam's theories are Al-Ghazali (1058-1111s) and Ibn-Khaldun (1332-1406s) (Al-Qaradawi, 2004; Btanya, 2006).

As noted previously, the student-teachers were used to a transmission model of education, in that they accept rather than question the knowledge that was given in their schooling and university programme. As previously argued, there are similar ideas about children's learning and development between Piaget's theories and those in Islamic religious beliefs. Therefore, the student-teachers tended to accept knowledge from western theories as readily as they accept Islamic beliefs. This means that student-teachers are able to sustain predominantly Islamic ways of thinking about EC, and they mainly accept the ways in which ECE is designed by the KSA policy makers. In addition, the knowledge that is provided for the student-teachers is mainly in the control of the college, and reflects education policy for teacher training, as well as for ECE. The influence of western theories can be seen in the ways that teachers develop creative approaches to their work, for example using western play resources, and western approaches to organising play activities and the classroom environment.

Student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs were being influenced by the dominant ideas throughout the university programme. Their knowledge was based on universal ideas about practice with young children, which reflects the cultural approaches and values

within Middle East and western countries. In this sense, the findings revealed that student-teachers' knowledge of teaching and learning was translated into their actual practice because they had universal ideas from their programme about childhood education which seemed not to contradict Saudi culture and values, and Islamic perspectives. They mixed different theories and beliefs, which were received through cultural transmission by lecturers, in their teaching. However, Saudi student-teachers tried to keep the traditional and dominant Muslim culture during their teaching mixed with these theories and beliefs through the KSA national curriculum. For example, all student-teachers linked their educational activities with children to some practices in worship, and taught them about the child's relationship with Allah. Thus, their Saudi cultural identity, which was related to Islamic beliefs, was imposed strongly on their practice with young children. This reflects what Yamani (2000) claimed, that the Saudi government encourages a '*conservative approach*' to teaching by giving the religious scholars '*supervisory controls*' over education policy, "even in the secular universities, and this resulted in a strong Islamic influence on the largely expanded university curricula" (Yamani, 2000, p. 63). Thus, it can be argued that it was not just the influence of the teacher education programme that shaped the teachers' knowledge and beliefs, but the wider socio-political context. In this sense, the purposes of education in Saudi society are related to the teachers' beliefs.

(b) Pedagogical content knowledge: teaching and learning strategies used with young children

Student-teachers in the second year began to study pedagogical strategies used in teaching children. They were trying to become familiar with a range of these strategies, and they started to define what were the best approaches/strategies for teaching children. However, this process was built on their 'image' of the teacher and teaching through the practical application/workshops at the university or through trying out teaching ideas with their own children, or with family members. Elbaz (1983) found that teachers use 'mental pictures' of teaching activities which reflect their beliefs about teaching practice. Pajares (1992) and Calderhead and Robson (1991) argue that student-teachers shape their 'image' of the teacher and teaching by their interpretations of modules and classroom practices which they observed, and these interpretations are highly influenced by these images. The researcher could see

that these images helped student-teachers to benefit from the knowledge which they received, and helped them to determine their teaching practice in an authentic context. However, they did not begin to practise in an authentic educational setting until the fourth year, which may limit their abilities to try out and refine their practices in a cumulative model.

Regarding the PCK about how to plan for adult- and child-initiated activities, play remains one of the most important means through which the curriculum is experienced by young children, not just in KSA but in global contexts (Broadhead, Howard, and Wood, 2010; Wood, 2008; Bennett, Wood and Rogers, 1997). In this programme, student-teachers learnt more about educational play than 'free play'. The findings indicated that student-teachers moved from valuing play to acknowledging that they needed to know how to plan for adult-directed activities. Through student-teachers' learning, they learnt about the importance of play and they had to plan adult directed-activities rather than only learning about child-initiated activities. This result concurs with the results by Williams (1999), Robson (1996), and Fleer, Anning and Cullen (2004). Hedges and Cullen (2011) discussed three curricular documents (from Australia, the UK, and New Zealand) concerning early learning goals and educational programmes. Although all the curricula emphasised that "play is the context in which children learn", Australia's Early Years Learning Framework indicated that "all the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities" (Hedges and Cullen, 2011, p. 7).

Although there are ongoing debates about the balance or mix of adult- and child-initiated activities in the EC curriculum (Rogers and Evans, 2008; Wood and Attfield, 2005; Wood, 2010), student-teachers in their TE programmes should understand the concept of 'playful learning and playful pedagogies'. Since the participants agreed that play is "a bridge into [the] world of children's learning", then this concept suggests that children have the right "to make choices" in indoor and outdoor environments to support their playful learning. The role of the adults is to create and sustain playful learning environments "in which choice is facilitated", and all children are enabled to participate and engage within these environments by adults' plans and purposes which are alongside the requirements of the national curriculum (Broadhead, Howard and Wood, 2010, p. 178). This 'choice' is "relational and contextual,

involving peers and adults as co-players", with adult involvement including "non-participant observation, focused interactions, direct teaching and sustained engagement" as illustrated by Broadhead, Howard and Wood (2010, pp. 182-183). In this sense, the researcher would agree with Wood's perspective, that "for many students in teacher education programmes, there is inadequate emphasis on the theoretical understanding and application of playful pedagogies. Even where students do address these areas, they may still experience dislocations between theory and practice" (Wood, 2010, p. 181).

The KSA curriculum claims to be based on Islamic beliefs and perspectives, and emphasises self-learning (that is, the child learns through play, motivation, exploration and discovery). However, by the fourth year, the student-teachers were placing more importance on adult-directed activities. This issue is also common to other curriculum models in ECE in different countries. There is research in England, such as that carried out by Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997), and Wood and Attfield (2005), to show that teachers value play and child-initiated activity but they plan a lot of adult-directed activities to achieve the goals set out in the curriculum. In the KSA kindergarten curriculum, teachers plan to meet children's needs, and these are expressed as curriculum goals. Therefore, the student-teachers were mostly planning for goals that were designed to meet the children's needs (as defined by the class teachers through the kindergarten curriculum).

In fact, the KSA curriculum itself requires both child-initiated activities and adult directed-activities. It was evident that most of the student-teachers organized play around adult-directed activities. However, although it seems that the student-teachers in teaching practice understood the nature of play in the KSA curriculum and the kinds of activities to present to children, there was a need to improve the quality of their teaching by allocating a larger amount of time for them to spend in actual practice in a kindergarten context to develop their PCK. This confirms that student-teachers need more opportunities to practise in the kindergarten in order to develop their own theories based on their own and other teachers' practice and understanding.

1.1.2 Kindergarten-based work

Through university-based work, student-teachers were aware of their professional knowledge 'knowing what they know', and most of them were very positive about the programme. However, when they went into the kindergarten context for teaching practice, they found that there were some inconsistencies between their university-based and kindergarten-based experiences. As a result, they then started to become more critical about the programme. There were student-teachers who indicated that the programme did not cover the core (The Self-Learning Curriculum) and the educational units of the KSA curriculum. This was an example of how their knowledge was developed through actual practice, leading to them becoming aware of what they had not covered in their university-based work that would have been useful to them in the kindergarten- based work.

The analysis of questionnaires and interviews also revealed that there was a relationship between student-teachers' beliefs and their practices. This supports the argument that there is a strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and classroom practice (Pajares, 1992) and that kindergarten teachers' beliefs about child development are correlated with practice (Trepanier-Street, Adler and Taylor, 2007). The data provided evidence that student-teachers' beliefs were similar in general. This is perhaps to be expected because all the participants were citizens from the same country, KSA, and in the same region, the Eastern Region, and learning to teach within the same social and cultural context. The current study does not agree with Basturkmen et al. (2004) that teachers' practices might not be influenced by contextual factors. In contrast, it concurs with studies by Gahin (2001), Stark (2002) and Mansour (2008c) that teachers' beliefs and their practices are influenced by the social and cultural context, where the contextual factors form and influence teachers' beliefs and these beliefs affect teachers' practices. The findings of this study provided insights into where student teachers' beliefs derived from, and how these were developed over time. However, some of the evidence indicated that they did not experience consistency between their university-based and school-based work.

The findings of the study indicated that student-teachers developed an understanding of "good" practice and effective strategies for engaging the children through kindergarten-based work. They were demonstrating more sophisticated pedagogical

understanding of which approaches to use for what purposes. This understanding, which student-teachers developed over time, was found because they were using and applying their knowledge in reality in their kindergarten practice. However, student-teachers were seeing a discontinuity between what they believed to be good practice, and what they were observing in the classroom. For example, some student-teachers wanted to plan trips and visits with children outside the kindergartens (as educational strategies which they had learnt during their university-based work) to support their teaching of some concepts and knowledge for children. However, the state kindergarten's senior management team refused to enable these educational trips and visits. This was because they were concerned about children's safety and were responsible for the children's welfare if they were outside the kindergarten.

Moreover, on some occasions, some of the student-teachers were unable to ascertain the children's level of knowledge and ability because of their lack of experience with a particular group of children. This means that student-teachers need time at the beginning of a placement to get to know their class and individuals within it well before they can pitch their teaching activities according to the children's knowledge and abilities. This reflects the necessity and importance of more frequent visits to kindergarten in learning to teach, because it provides possibilities to know the children well, and this in turn leads to more successful activities and outcomes with children. This result supports the argument of Fleer et al., (2004) with regard to the powerful influence of positive interaction between children and their teachers: planned activities, combined with high quality teaching, result in positive outcomes for children. It is also supported by the findings from the EPPE project, which demonstrated that there was a positive relationship between having qualified trained kindergarten teachers and the learning outcomes of the children (Sylva et al., 2003). Thus, more practical experience is important in learning to teach because practice provides many opportunities for professional development for student-teachers, such as: developing the ability to theorise from and within practice; testing out ideas and strategies; learning through support from more knowledgeable others; and ascertaining how to plan lessons that match the children's level of knowledge and ability.

In this respect, the nature of teaching and learning in this ITE programme was influenced by many factors. An important one was that the number of hours available to student-teachers to teach at the kindergarten did not exceed 16 hours per week for 12 weeks. It is worth noting that this amount of time was not sufficient to enable the student-teachers to gain the required experience to teach effectively at the kindergarten. Furthermore, the interviews showed that some student-teachers did not apply some of their knowledge and beliefs about teaching young children that they had learned in their programme within the kindergarten schools. It is proposed here that it is better for the duration of practice to be across the four years, which is the case, for example, in teacher education programmes in the UK. Even in the one year Postgraduate Certificate of Education programme in England, student-teachers spend 19 out of 39 weeks in a kindergarten or school. This is because the continuous interaction between the student-teachers and the children is important for learning in this particular age group.

Section 2: Models of Initial Teacher Education

There are a number of models of teaching and learning evident in ITE programmes in the KSA. It is clear that teacher-educators themselves are one of the factors which produce/form these models, which in turn affects the effectiveness of programme design. They reflect their own beliefs and the ways in which they impact on programme design, as illustrated by Martin (2005). Table 11.1 shows the structure of the programme and models of ITE. The researcher identifies four models in ITE programmes in the KSA, derived from the analysis of participants' interviews:

Table 11.1 Structure of the programme and models of initial teacher education

	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**
Term 1	*University*	*University*	*University*	*University*
Term 2	*University*	*University*	*University*	*Practical/kindergarten*
	Transmission model			**Apprenticeship model**
	Cumulative model			**Reflective model**

2.1 The cultural transmission model

This study argues that the student-teachers were learning through a cultural transmission model of ITE; knowledge was provided by the lecturers, and this was adopted by student-teachers. Teaching was therefore a process of transferring knowledge to student-teachers. Although all forms of education imply some cultural transmission, the model of teaching and learning used here is based on quite didactic methods, in that student-teachers were expected to reproduce the knowledge that was given to them by the lecturers. This is consistent with Mansour's study of Science teachers in Egypt (2008b, p. 244) who illustrated that "learning is a process of knowledge reproduction". In this sense, student-teachers in this study were not developing a questioning attitude towards the content of the programme. Specifically, they were not able to question or challenge the educational theories that were used in the programme, such as Piaget's theory about children's learning and development. This resulted in some of the student-teachers seeming to have their own generalizations about children's learning and development, which led to the stereotyping or labelling of children. This was exemplified by student-teachers believing that children from low-SES (Socioeconomic Status) families would not be encouraged to read in the home context.

Thus, developing student-teachers' knowledge over time was dependent mainly on accepting what the lecturers said and what the student-teachers read in the recommended books. Historically, this is the way in which young Saudi female students in general have been enculturated as learners. It is evidenced through the data that the lecturers did not encourage student-teachers to question these ideas about children's learning and development, and that they were transmitters of knowledge to the student-teachers. This means that the programme needs to help student-teachers to develop a wider repertoire of skills and knowledge than is currently the case, for example, by taking a critical approach to theories of learning and development, being reflective, and learning how to direct their own learning. It could also be argued that student-teachers need to become reflective because kindergarten education is undergoing rapid developments in KSA, and KSA as a society is becoming more focused on improving educational quality and outcomes. So, a model based on cultural reproduction may be at odds with wider social and educational policy aspirations.

On the other hand, it is obvious that, although teachers were not the only source of student-teachers' knowledge, they transmitted their previous experience as teachers to student-teachers, and these student-teachers were then passing this heritage, whether positive or negative, to their pupils in schools, as Kamil (2011) found in her study. Moreover, student-teachers' beliefs were influenced by what they had inherited from their earlier life experiences, and were profoundly shaped by cultural and Islamic beliefs.

2.2 The cumulative model

The findings revealed that the ITE programmes in KSA are traditional programmes, because the emphasis is on learning large amounts of information at university, namely because learning is seen as an increase in student-teachers' knowledge. However, developed models of teaching and learning focus on positive communication between teacher-educators and student-teachers in which there is emphasis on student-teachers understanding and using knowledge, and becoming aware of their own thinking and learning (Wood, 2000). This programme focuses more on cumulative knowledge than on enabling the student-teachers to think as teachers who reflect continually on their teaching practice.

2.3 The reflective practice model

The findings indicated that there were some characteristics of a reflective practice model of teaching, which was evident in the student-teachers' teaching practice. However, although the participants in the current study observed a class teacher's teaching style to learn/benefit from the ways in which they taught children, the data showed that these student-teachers did not ask questions relating to their observations of the classroom teacher's teaching. Those student-teachers tried to define their strengths (effective practice) and weakness (less successful activities), and they attempted to discover the reasons behind these, and to suggest convenient solutions. However, their thinking about their teaching was not critical, which again reflects the dominant approaches to education in Saudi schools and universities. So, in some respects, the culture of the school is consistent with that in the university. In this sense, the researcher would agree with Hargrave and Thompson (2001, p. 36), who state that the purpose of classroom experience is to provide student-teachers "with an

opportunity to critically analyze the processes and techniques of effective" teaching practices.

2.4 The apprenticeship model

The data present a "model" of ITE that is consistent in some respects with socio-cultural apprenticeship theories. As defined in Chapter Three, this is an apprenticeship model of teaching. However, the findings indicated that there were some limitations to the apprenticeship model because the student-teachers had experience of teaching practice only in the fourth year. Therefore, the time given was insufficient to reflect on their understanding of effective practice, or to develop deep knowledge and understanding of the essential characteristics of 'professional' teachers (John, 1996). At the same time, much university-based teaching was based on a transmission model: student-teachers were not being taught to be independent and autonomous in their learning, and were encouraged to memorise content. Therefore, in the KSA context, the apprenticeship model is based on helping student-teachers to build knowledge, in the university, about their subject, pedagogy, learners and educational context. They learn the theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching without sufficient opportunities for practice with children. Thus, the researcher concludes that the forms of knowledge which are valuable for teaching in the ITE programmes include subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, both of which should take place alongside one another (through learning from the input at university at the same time as learning from practice at the kindergarten) from the first year onwards. However, the concept of apprenticeship needs to be extended through more opportunities for teaching practice, in order to build knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of being an EC teacher.

As the programme provides a range of theoretical aspects in the field of ITE, then a variety of models of teaching which are effective and appropriate to the context is required to support student-teachers' learning and practice. Thus, the roles for the universities, schools, lecturers, class teachers and student-teachers should be clear for them so that national educational goals can be achieved.

Two types of apprenticeship model were defined in chapter three (see Table 3.3, p. 73 (Fish, 1995, p. 43, in Martin, 2004, p. 46)), and both are important in ITE. They are

the technical-rational view and the professional-artistry view. Based on these views, Table 11.2 summarises the characteristics adopted from these views in the ITE programmes in the KSA context, which are based on the responses of the participants.

Table 11.2 Characteristics of the KSA apprenticeship model based on the technical-rational view and the professional-artistry view

The technical-rational view	Characteristics of KSA apprenticeship model		The professional-artistry view
Follows rules, laws, schedules; uses routines, prescriptions	✓		Starts where rules fade; sees patterns, frameworks
Uses diagnosis/analysis to think about teaching			Uses interpretation and appreciation to think about teaching
Wants efficient systems		✓	Wants creativity and room to be wrong
Sees knowledge as graspable, permanent	✓		Sees knowledge as temporary, dynamic, problematic
Theory is applied to practice	✓		Theory emerges from practice
Visible performance is central	✓		There is more to it than surface features
Setting out and testing for basic competences is vital	✓		There is more to teaching than the sum of the parts
Technical expertise is all			Professional judgement counts
Sees professional activities as masterable	✓		Sees mystery at the heart of professional activities
Emphasise the known	✓		Embraces uncertainty
Standards must be fixed; standards are measurable; standards must be controlled	✓		That which is most easily fixed and measurable is also trivial- professionals should be trusted
Emphasises assessment, appraisal, inspection, accreditation	✓		Emphasises investigation, reflection, deliberation
Change must be managed from outside	✓	✓	Professional can develop from inside
Quality is really about quantity of that which is easily measurable	✓		Quality comes from deepening insight into one's values, priorities, actions
Technical accountability			Professional answerability
This is training		✓	This is education
Takes the instrumental view of learning		✓	Sees education as intrinsically worthwhile

Note: shaded box= None

It seems that the apprenticeship model that the researcher has revealed in this chapter could be about learning to copy the experts, in which case it is about cultural reproduction and is consistent with the transmission model. However, student-teachers were trying to be creative in their learning, adaptive to new circumstances and innovations, flexible and transformational. This was evident through their workshop endeavours at university and their teaching practice at kindergarten. They were creating activities for children's learning and development, based on the theories

which they had studied, on their actual interaction with the class teacher as model, and on knowledge drawn from more knowledgeable others. Thus, alternative or/and improved models could be considered for improving ITE programmes in the KSA, models which are appropriate to the KSA context and which lead to the development of student-teachers' professional knowledge and their practice.

Section 3: Communities of Practice

To become a teacher requires not just obtaining 'discrete knowledge' of subject and pedagogy. It requires 'immersion' in education communities, in which "the individual develops a conceptual and experiential understanding of the practice, norms, and language of the community", where teacher-educators "have their respective professional cultures" (Hargrave and Thompson, 2001, p. 32). Student-teacher immersion will be through their participation and engagement in activities of the culture; these activities are authentic when "they engage people in the ordinary practices of a culture" (Op. cit.). In this sense, the EC concepts and teaching/learning strategies used with young children are found and practised in complex contexts. Therefore, it seems that the current programme helped, to some extent, to meet/develop these features of community of practice.

Over time and with more practical opportunities for planning activities and presenting typical lessons at university, it is evident that student-teachers at the end of the third year were moving towards the centre of a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Hara, 2000; Barab, 2000). The concept of a community of practice within a KSA context is a community of lecturers and student-teachers in a formal education environment at a university, where lecturers as teacher-educators provide the knowledge and their experiences to student-teachers regarding dominant theories and practices about children's learning and development and play. Through lectures, class application and workshops in which student-teachers teach lessons as classroom teachers, they learn how to be teachers.

Accordingly, it was evident from the data that there were formal and informal conversations, inside and outside the classroom, between lecturers and student-teachers on the one hand, and among student-teachers on the other hand. Also, there were social opportunities such as informal conversations and meetings between

student-teachers and their relatives/friends who were working in the ECE field. This means that they started sharing their knowledge, ideas, dominant views, and experiences, and were able to learn important information from each other to build practical knowledge about ECE. Such exchanges would be beneficial for student-teachers because it would help them to move easily from the university community of practice towards the centre of a community of practice at the kindergarten, where teaching practice is in an authentic context. Thus, they would learn how to become "reflective practitioners" as well as members of a community of teachers (Bonk, Hara, Dennen, Malikowski and Supplee, 2000, p. 34).

In this sense, student-teachers in the university community were learning concepts about readiness and child development, and learning that these concepts had pedagogical implications. For example, there were statements that reflected student-teachers' wider educational beliefs about childhood, and about appropriate educational practices with young children. This issue poses a problem for trainee teachers, especially if their teaching practice starts in the last year of their professional preparation, because they are faced with different communities of practice. The university community was focused on subject knowledge and pedagogy, with practical applications through workshops in which student-teachers presented their lessons without actual interaction with children. In the kindergarten community, on the other hand, the participants learnt how to teach young children through their actual interaction with them and via the modelling of the class teacher. Significantly, familiarity between children and the student-teachers needs to take place. With the current training programme, the opportunity to attain this familiarity will only be available for qualified teachers in the Kg schools. In this respect, the researcher could argue that these different communities of practice, the university and the kindergarten, impacted on the ways in which student-teachers taught. At university, student-teachers learnt to teach young children from an ideal or idealistic perspective. However, within the kindergarten community their learning was affected by the realities of working with children every day.

Although student-teachers needed to know more about the KSA kindergarten curriculum through the content taught at the university, they tried to be flexible and adaptable and learn through the practices that were modelled for them by the class

teacher. They adapted their knowledge about ECE principles, which they learnt through the programme content, to be consonant with the pre-school curriculum in KSA. This result reflects the claim by Isenberg (1990) that theories will be adapted in the field with children, problems and classrooms which are real. Moreover, this result reflects the role of undertaking actual classroom practice at kindergarten and, through teaching the national kindergarten curriculum, consequently understanding the characteristics of effective practice, and the characteristics of less successful activities within their practice. In this sense, university and classroom-based practice contributed to the development of the student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs transmitted through the knowledge and experience of the lecturers at the university and the classroom teachers at the kindergarten. Lecturers and classroom teachers' roles were derived from the data analysis. This concurs with the results by Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt (2001) that these roles include providing support and encouraging student-teachers, giving advice and suggestions, evaluating a student-teacher's lessons, and preparing a student-teacher for school life.

Section 4: Teacher Identity

4.1 The image of the subject and teacher identity

Kindergarten student-teachers came to the programme with existing beliefs that underpinned their further development. The findings showed how student-teachers were interested in working with pre-school children, and their studies confirmed for them that the programme was the correct choice. In this sense, the findings revealed that the participants had positive feelings towards ECE. This was because they believed that the programme kept them in touch with the realities of life, and would help them to prepare a strong generation which would be able to benefit the society in terms of national and global changes. This positive belief was influenced by trends within current policy developments in KSA, which has led to the expansion of kindergarten education, and for programmes for the training of kindergarten teachers to be initiated. Thus student-teachers built a teacher identity that reflected the wider social-cultural purposes of education in Saudi society.

Another aspect of the cultural context is that in KSA becoming a teacher is a socially acceptable career for women. So, student-teachers built a teacher identity that was consistent with wider social-cultural expectations of their roles in society. This unique

‘teacher identity’ began with an ‘image of the ECE teacher’, and then developed over time and through teaching practice. Images of how student teachers saw themselves as a ‘future teacher’ were constructed through their initial choice to become a kindergarten teacher, the outcomes of taking the kindergarten programme, and their existing identities as women in Saudi society. There were several key images: ‘a person who provides guidance and encouragement’ to the learners; ‘a resource maker and provider’; ‘a person who prepares educational context’ inside the classroom; ‘a person who supports child’s growth’ in a natural environment similar to a child’s family environment; ‘a person who completes the role of the family/home-school circle’; ‘a person who uses a variety of methods’ in order to discover what abilities and capacities the child possesses. These images moved student-teachers toward a more professional stance, and supported their identities as teachers in the classroom. As well as these images, they developed their pedagogical orientations alongside their ‘teacher identity’. In other words, they created their own professional identities from these images through the processes of reflection on their effective practice, in relation to their classrooms and their contexts, in which they concentrated on all aspects of the children’s development (physical, social, cognitive and psychological). Sutherland, Howard and Markauskaite (2010, p. 457) stated that student-teachers “begin to refine their initial concepts of teaching and being to create a self-image of themselves as teacher” through their participation in practical experiences. Through the teaching practice, student-teachers reflected on the role of the KSA culture and religion in the children’s life and the impact of their identities in classroom teaching practices.

4.2 Cultural identity and teacher identity

In the context of KSA, kindergarten student-teachers developed a distinct professional identity that was linked with their cultural identities and reflected the dominant values and beliefs in society. Student-teachers saw themselves as teachers and as mothers when they learnt about ECE. They believed that the programme benefited them as teachers and as mothers. Many of the Saudi students at universities are mothers of young children because “girls in KSA tend to marry at an early age” (Gahwaji, 2006, p. 26), and culturally it is quite important to be mothers. So, student-teachers were motivated to join the programme and to take modules related to ECE. Also, according to KSA cultural customs, the elder sister in the family is responsible for helping her mother to care for her younger siblings. Consequently, student-teachers’ knowledge

and beliefs were influenced by their own social, cultural and historical context. There is evidence in the current study about trying out teaching ideas with their own children, or with family members. Moreover, the findings from teaching practice indicated that student-teachers' beliefs were influenced by what they had inherited from their earlier life experience from their socio-cultural context. Also, the educational socio-cultural context influenced their identity as teachers and their professional development. This result validates many arguments by authors such as Mansour (2008c) and Hargreaves (1994), who argue that:

> *Local cultures give meaning, support and identity to teachers and their work… What they do there in terms of classroom styles and strategies is powerfully affected by the outlooks and orientations of the colleagues with whom they work now and have worked in the past. In this respect, teacher cultures, the relationships between teachers and their colleagues, are among the most educationally significant aspects of teachers' lives and work. They provide a vital context for teacher development and for the ways that teachers teach* (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 165).

However, the researcher could also argue that there were limited opportunities for this to happen in the programme because student-teachers had relatively little time in kindergartens. So, the question arises: would the student-teachers be developing a different, and possibly more coherent, teacher identity if they had more time for kindergarten-based work?

4.3 Religious beliefs and teacher identity

Learning to teach involves transmitting and reproducing the society's dominant values and beliefs. This is evident through the data regarding religion, behaviours, and what knowledge is valued in the kindergarten curriculum (as stated in the KSA kindergarten curriculum). The data illustrated how student-teachers learn to be kindergarten teachers in the context of KSA as an Islamic country. Arguably, almost everything takes place within the framework of Islamic beliefs and perspectives, which can be grouped into three broad areas: children and childhood, the forms of knowledge that are valued within the kindergarten curriculum, and ways that student-teachers are prepared to teach in ITE programmes. As Yamani (2000, p. 116) observed, "Islam appears to be the dominant building block of Saudi identity". Through her research she found that:

> *All the young people interviewed expressed a desire for Saudi Arabia to remain a Muslim society ruled by an overtly Muslim state* (Yamani, 2000, p. 117).

According to "The Self-Learning Curriculum for Kindergarten", in KSA, the teachers are required to be strong guides to children with regard to Islamic beliefs and appropriate behaviours. Inevitably, the Islamic perspective has an impact on ITE programmes. These student-teachers needed to maintain a focus on religion to support teaching religion to children. This supports Mansour's perspective (2008a) that teachers' experiences and religious beliefs shape their identities, and will impact on their orientations and how they teach their pupils, when the Islamic religion is the foundation of Saudi culture and society. These student-teachers, as teachers in an authentic context, instilled religious values in children through stories of the prophets, the child's learning of the Holy Quran and some acts of worship. In this respect, the researcher agrees with Yamani's finding (2000) that Saudi women's experiences are shaped by "an authentic identity coherent with traditional Muslim culture" (Yamani, 2000, p. 99). Therefore, it can be claimed that there is a strong relationship between passing on religious beliefs and educational identity.

4.4 Social changes and teacher identity

The findings showed that Saudi student-teachers were trying to preserve/maintain their religion, traditions, beliefs and values. However, wider social changes and modern life in KSA, which are related to international contexts, influenced their understanding of how they learn. These student-teachers developed their knowledge into a coherent whole, by connecting areas of learning within the modules, and reflecting on what was happening in wider society. For example, they needed to learn more English through their ITE programme. This supports the perspective of Hickey (2011), Wood (2008), Mansour (2008c), Brown and Mayor (1961), and Marsigit (2007), that cultural, social, economic and political changes impact on educational processes/provision, and the professional preparation programmes of teachers should take into account the changing curriculum in schools, and student-teachers' needs. Educational beliefs depend on "the general politico-social environment of the time and the place in which they are set" (Dunne, 2003, p. 75). Nowadays, when Saudis are open to the world through the use of ICT, and through travelling, either for the purposes of tourism, or, following the aims of current KSA educational policy, for

periods of overseas study, in order to fulfil the aspirations of the country to progress, then the development of student-teachers' English and the pedagogical use of ICT is significant. In this sense, Yamani (2000, p. 58) illustrated that "for young Saudi Arabians the ability to speak a foreign language has become a symbol of a range of conflicting aspirations". She explained:

> *English is also the language of instruction and of technical knowledge, and it is crucial for success in the secular field of business, commerce, higher education and government. Therefore, proficiency in spoken and written English becomes a status symbol, a marker for the ability to obtain private education and to travel abroad, and a sign of a cosmopolitan life-style* (Yamani, 2000, p. 58).

Section 5: Constraints Affecting Kindergarten Student-teachers' Learning and Teaching

Although the content of modules, lecturers' knowledge, experience and support, workshops at university, and visits to kindergarten helped student-teachers to build knowledge of teaching in ECE, some important constraints affected student-teachers' learning and teaching. There were three trends, one of them relating to the university context, the second to the kindergarten context, and the third to the social-cultural context in KSA.

5.1 Constraints related to the university context

These constraints included: the lack of visits to kindergarten over the four-year programme; lack of experience of interacting with children; insufficient amount of time for practical application in some modules; inadequate university facilities; a large number of required assignments; repetition/redundant content of some modules; a large number of student-teachers in the classrooms; absence of a personal tutor; lack of lecturer competence; lack of support and feedback from lecturers; and a confused registration system for modules, where some modules from the third or fourth year could be taken before the corresponding module from the second or third year.

There were some student-teachers who indicated that memorising information for the sake of an exam was one of the negative aspects of their learning. This might be because some lecturers presented them with source materials that backed up their expected answer in the exam. There are some studies that have been conducted in the Arab and Islamic countries, for example, in the states of Kuwait and Egypt, which

have confirmed that students memorise mostly the knowledge of all the subjects because they do not have self-learning strategies. They attributed the cause of memorization to the students' perceptions that it is their responsibility to memorise the information. In the literature review, it was identified that efficient teachers play the role of facilitator in the university context. However, it is evident that these student-teachers did not have enough support from the lecturers regarding teaching them about self-learning strategies, as some student-teachers confirmed that their lecturers encouraged memorisation of the knowledge of their subjects. This finding supports what Kamil (2011) illustrated, that teachers encourage student-teachers to memorise the knowledge for the purpose of getting high grades. They did not encourage their students to use their strong intellectual ability. She attributes the cause of memorization to the teaching styles of the university teachers and not to the student-teachers. However, teachers and student-teachers are both practising what they inherited from their previous educational experiences, namely a predominantly transmission model of education.

Hence, the society and the context in which the student-teachers live impact on their beliefs and on the ways in which they learn. In KSA, the cultural values of people in that community respect students who have high grades and they provide them with all the privileges, such as priority in obtaining a teaching post, and they believe that those students are more intelligent. Thus, the relationship between getting high grades and being intelligent in that community is positive and valued. Also, many families in KSA expect the younger generation to obtain a university qualification, and expect that their children will obtain a certificate with high grades. This means that high grades are encouraged and socially valued. In this respect, the researcher notes the family influence on the new generation in KSA regarding educational values, as Yamani (2000, p. 55) stated from her interviews with young people:

> *The majority of the young people interviewed said that their families had influenced their attitudes and personalities more than their education … the majority used the experiences and opinions of key family members to choose the discipline they studied and the career training they undertook.*

Rote memorisation is not consistent with learning and creativity. Teachers need to help their students to be creative by using their intellectual abilities and developing their knowledge. Moreover, teachers also need to be flexible and autonomous in how

they plan activities, and in their differentiation of children with special educational needs. This research has not addressed all the factors or causes that encourage student-teachers to memorise. Further research is needed for this purpose, particularly, exploring a more transformative approach to the apprenticeship model that is practised in KSA.

Although, over the time, student-teachers showed a personal commitment to learn by self-learning, their experience and confidence were poor in the areas of accessing library materials to support their learning, and in using ICT. This may be due to their dependency, lack of seriousness or that they were overwhelmed with work from lecturers who were unconcerned about the large number of modules which the student-teachers were studying at each level. It is possible that the librarians were not sufficiently professional in assisting student-teachers to use the library facilities and ICT, or that there was no advanced technology in the university's WebCT to be used by student-teachers. All these may be influential factors; Hickey's study on improving the individual motivation of learners illustrated that the technological context is "seen as a fundamental part of learned knowledge" (Hickey, 2011, p. 140). However, there was also an issue of lecturers' experience in using ICT. Consequently, there was no efficient interaction between student-teachers and their lecturers regarding the use of web-based learning tools. This restricted the student-teachers' abilities to develop self-learning strategies.

With regard to training student-teachers in research skills, similar problems were evident. Lecturers did not encourage student-teachers to pursue scientific research, which led student-teachers to depend on textbooks with a notable lack of efficient self-learning through library facilities to investigate and reflect on their knowledge. Again, the researcher could say that this is not an effective apprenticeship model because student-teachers were not being taught to be independent and autonomous in their learning.

In the context of learning in KSA, in general education which incorporates primary and secondary schools, most pupils are not familiar with independent reading habits and with researching outside their textbooks. Although each school in KSA contains a small library, pupils are not sufficiently trained and motivated to read more or to

investigate beyond the books they use in class. As a consequence, new student-teachers starting at university may struggle until they acquire the reading and writing skills required of undergraduate students.

Another constraint in the university programme, which has already been discussed, is the lack of visits to kindergartens over the whole programme, and teaching practice being available only in the fourth year of study. Both of these constraints resulted in insufficient opportunities for interacting with children. Consequently, student-teachers were not able to reflect on what was effective about their practice until they had their fourth year teaching practice experience in local kindergartens. So, their professional preparation was influenced by the number of visits allocated to them to gain teaching experience over the programme. This finding supports what Alzaydi (2010, p. 253) confirmed in his study in the KSA, that the period of teaching practice experience was shorter than the intended fifteen weeks, and "did not give enough time for student teachers to learn about teaching in the school context". In this sense, teaching practice in kindergarten from the first year would help student-teachers to clarify and reinforce the theoretical knowledge taught in the programme, and help them to reflect on their practical experience over time.

These constraints suggest that the national policies have to be considered in designing ITE programmes. This is because, in the context of learning in KSA, the duration of teaching practice experience is one term (approximately 15 weeks) for all ITE programmes. In addition, the policy and decision makers at the MOE could re-consider designing ITE programmes, through the partnership between school/kindergarten and university when student-teachers go for teaching practice in local kindergartens each study year. The MOE has sole responsibility for deciding for each university/college in the region, which schools/kindergartens are allocated for training student-teachers, the number of student-teachers in each kindergarten to be trained, and the duration of their visits each term, whether for observation or teaching practice. Therefore, policy changes need to come from the centre, as they cannot be changed by the individual universities. Changes to the duration of practice would also entail wider changes to the number of teachers and kindergartens involved, and the roles of university tutors in monitoring and supporting student practice. They also require a suitable environment and facilities for learning, and practice is necessary for student-teachers in the field of ECE. Another possible solution would be to have

kindergartens attached to all colleges of education for demonstration and student-teacher observations. The questionnaire data reinforce these findings.

5.2 Constraints related to the kindergarten context

Although the findings of the current study agree with Cheng's findings (2005, p. 359), which illustrated that supportive class teachers "played an important role in helping the student-teachers learn to teach in the school context", there were constraints including the lack of support from some of the class teachers and the senior management team at the kindergarten. The data suggest the main constraining factors included: class teachers did not share their professional experiences; they did not accept student-teachers as trainees in their classrooms; they did not provide suggestions to the student-teachers to improve their performance; and they did not provide reflective/constructive feedback on student-teachers' own teaching practice. Regarding the senior management team, the main constraining factors included: their dealing with student-teachers was very limited; there was no flexibility; and they did not accept changes that the trainee teachers aimed to bring about. Furthermore, they prevented student-teachers from using the workshop place and its tools, and they requested trainees to produce educational aids for kindergarten, so they were encumbered with a lot of work during their teaching practice. Other constraints included the lack of facilities/equipments that help student-teachers to teach - for example, having an overhead projector in each classroom - the large number of children not appropriate to the size of the classroom, and the lack of liaising/co-operation between the family of the child and the kindergarten.

Thus, in order to support student-teachers' learning and professional development during their teaching practice, they need to receive emotional and practical support from class teachers and the senior management team at the kindergarten, rather than only observing their teaching and interacting with children. Reflecting on the nature of the apprenticeship model in this study, these constraints underline the limitations of this model. A more expansive apprenticeship model would involve much more collaboration, co-operation and support by the experts to support the novices. In a more expansive model, all parties together can benefit from each other through an exchange of their ideas, knowledge and experience in the field of ECE, and they can thereby obtain up-to-date information to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

However, in some cases what happened to student-teachers during their teaching practice was determined by kindergarten policy, which in turn was affected by the educational system stipulated by the MOE in KSA. For example, there were no regular educational trips with children outside the state kindergartens. Although the political decision-makers agree with the viewpoint that field trips play an important role in children's learning and development, there are many steps required to gain permission from MOE to take kindergarten children outside the classroom and into the real world. In addition, informed consent is required from kindergarten-children's parents to take their children outside the kindergarten.

Moreover, these trips/journeys were mostly for children in Kg2 and Kg3 rather than Kg1. This was because the senior management teams at the kindergarten were concerned for children's safety. In this respect, Tomlinson argued that the "educational system reflects the dominant power on the society" (Tomlinson, 1993, as cited in Mansour, 2008c, p. 141). From this point, the researcher could claim that although it is obvious that KSA policy is aimed toward expanding kindergartens, there are other things that need to change as well, such as the procedures and educational system which are related to the society, culture and context of KSA. For example, the daily programme in kindergarten does not exceed more than three and half hours, so this period would be insufficient to cover the time for outside trips. Another reason could be related to kindergarten-children's parents. They may not agree to have their children taken outside the kindergarten because they may believe that, in their absence, there could be inadequate supervision of their children from classroom teachers. Culturally, in the context of the KSA, the majority of women are still dependent on men, who are seen as protectors. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the classroom teachers would not be able to solve all the problems which might face them in the outdoor environment. An additional possible constraint for the outside trips is the nature of the climate in KSA, with extremely high temperatures during the day for most of the year. Moreover, there could be an issue of the availability of transport from MOE to support these trips/journeys.

5.3 Constraints related to the social-cultural context

Although the lecturers' competence was helpful in supporting student-teachers learning, the cultural context in KSA had a negative impact on student-teachers'

learning in some cases. For example, student-teachers did not agree with the lecturer's suggestion to record their voices to attach to the written stories for children, because the lecturer was a man. Consequently, at the end of their programme of university-based work they stated their lack of skill in the delivery of a story to children in terms of sounds. This phenomenon, which is related to the social-cultural context, is supported by Yamani (2000) in her study about changed identities and the challenge of the new generation in Saudi Arabia. She explained:

> *Social concepts of honour and shame mean that most women would not agree to meet and converse with men who were not family members. While …normally Saudi men will agree to be interviewed by a female researcher, especially when maintaining the appropriate formalities such as dress code and language* (Yamani, 2000, p. 152).

However, this point connects to both ideas about teacher identity and about the Saudi social-cultural context. In this respect, the researcher could see what the female students, who will become kindergarten teachers, perceive to be valuable and appropriate knowledge. In KSA all children in younger years and also all female students are taught by women until the end of secondary school. So, the student-teachers' memories and understanding of who holds appropriate knowledge from which they can learn to be a kindergarten teacher is based on this knowledge (and on their memories of their own experiences as young children). They demonstrated in their interviews that they characterised teaching as a mothering role and they ascribed mothering characteristics to women (because in Saudi society the role of men, in general, is as protector and provider, not nurturer). Therefore, when they were taught by a male lecturer they might not have thought that they needed to listen to all his views because he might not have held credibility as someone who has appropriate knowledge.

Summary of the Chapter

This discussion chapter has identified the main themes arising from the data, with regard to Saudi culture and values. Many of the factors influenced the way in which student-teachers were trained within Saudi culture and practices. The chapter outlined models of teaching and learning in ITE programmes in the KSA; with regards to the apprenticeship model, the researcher indicated that there were some important limitations. The chapter provided the concept of a community of practice within a KSA context, and how student-teachers built their teaching identities, which reflected

the wider social-cultural purposes of education in Saudi society, and which were consistent with wider social-cultural expectations of their roles in society. The chapter concluded by outlining many constraints influencing their preparation as teachers that were specific to the Saudi context, and would not be experienced by student-teachers in some others countries.

Chapter Twelve: Conclusion

Introduction

This study makes a contribution to knowledge of ITE in KSA because it brings a previously under-researched aspect to light - that of student-teachers' perspectives and experiences. The study has investigated student-teachers' perspectives on how their knowledge and beliefs were built and developed over a four-year programme in the particular social and cultural context of KSA as an Islamic state. The findings revealed patterns in the responses of student-teachers according to their year of study, as discussed in the previous chapters.

As mentioned at the beginning of the study, KSA (like many other countries) is developing ECE provision within a national policy framework for the EC curriculum, and for the professional preparation of teachers. In this respect, this study makes a contribution to the wider international literature on ITE. The recommendations reflect the findings of the study, and the improvements or changes that need to be made in order to enhance the quality of ITE programmes, and the knowledge and experience of student teachers. Several important implications arise from these findings. Attention will be drawn to the significance of the findings for:

Government level: policy and decision makers in KSA,
University level: pre-service teacher-educators, personal tutors and librarians,
School level: classroom teachers and senior management teams,
Student level: student-teachers in KSA, and also
ITE programmes: the structure, the curriculum, and the pedagogical approaches.

Although all levels should work together, with complementary roles for developing ITE programmes, there are specific areas of responsibility for each, which will be presented in turn. The chapter concludes by making suggestions for further research.

Section 1: Implications/Recommendations of the Study

1.1 Government Level

1.1.1 Policy and decision makers in KSA

The most important implication for policy and decision makers in the MOHE and MOE, concerns the importance of the ITE programmes incorporating a practical

element in an authentic context throughout the programme. It was argued that "continuous training helps teachers update their knowledge and cope with the demands of teaching… teacher knowledge develops with teaching experience" (Abdelhafez, 2010, p. 279).

Currently, the national policy for all ITE programmes in KSA provide for one term of practical, school-based experience for pre-service teachers which takes place in the last term of their programme. This national policy is the reason for the many limitations to this version of the apprenticeship model of teaching. Policy and decision makers in KSA are responsible for the planning/designing of the ITE programmes. Therefore, a change in national policy is required for effective ITE programmes. This raises the question of how the findings of a study such as this one can inform policy makers at government level. Without such channels of communication it is unlikely that any change will occur in the academic process which is adopted by universities in which pre-service teachers are trained in authentic contexts.

Furthermore, the MOE is responsible for planning, organisation and co-ordination between schools/kindergartens and universities/colleges. Therefore, a further channel of communication is needed so that decision makers at the MOE could re-consider whether they would allow student-teachers to make more visits to kindergartens throughout their programme by increasing the availability of placements and giving them more time to stay at kindergarten, in order to support student-teachers' learning experiences. Another recommendation is that kindergartens should be attached to all colleges of education for training of student-teachers in order that they can practise what they have learned.

1.2 University Level

1.2.1 Pre-service teacher-educators

The findings highlighted that there was some repetition in the programme content. Therefore, there should be ongoing communication between all pre-service teacher-educators in this programme, at least before the beginning of each term. This collaboration would assist lecturers in solving problems regarding the content of the programme, because the feedback from colleagues and sharing knowledge and ideas

about teaching and learning is one of the sources of developing the ITE programme. The co-ordinator of the Kindergarten Major may play an important role in this regard, as Abdelhfez claimed, "through arranging regular meeting with teachers to discuss problematic issues and suggest possible solutions" (Abdelhfez, 2010, p. 283). The continuous evaluation and adjustment of the content of ITE programmes is recommended, through ongoing communication with pre-service teacher-educators, about what knowledge is presented, and on what data or research it is based. The IT educators should be committed to module objectives as they are illustrated in the course handbook to avoid repetition.

The findings indicated that pre-service teacher-educators as a part of the university community, play an important role in building and developing the knowledge and beliefs of student-teachers. All the staff in this programme were contracted and there is an urgent need for those educators to be invited to attend seminars/meetings at kindergartens, which establish ongoing debate and dialogue, to receive updates and further training about the context of practice in KSA and the national curriculum (which gives high attention to the Saudi culture, values and social beliefs). This is necessary in order to make meaningful links to the curriculum and contexts in their taught modules.

When there is a positive partnership between the university and kindergartens, this could lead to opportunities to interact and work together so that they become familiar with the national curriculum and learn through the exchange of knowledge and experiences. Consequently, this contact could be beneficial in student-teacher preparation and in their practice. Pre-service teacher-educators could benefit from classroom teachers' experience and knowledge, and in turn classroom teachers might develop professionally through the opportunities they are offered to engage with pre-service teacher-educators and learn from their work and professional life. This is because both partners are a valuable source of knowledge and experience with regard to teaching and learning in the field of ECE. In this respect, Holden (2004, p. 257) claims that "good debate is healthy and controversy is preferable to apathy, even if the end result may be a compromise for both sides".

Pre-service teacher-educators can foster in student-teachers the self-learning which forms the basis of effective pre-service teacher development. Also, they can reinforce critical thinking about the theories taught in their programme by engaging student-teachers in a process of dialogue, motivating them to investigate beyond course materials, encouraging them to approach the theories taught with a questioning mind, and defining the effective principles in ECE to be applied in their teaching practice. This study found that student-teachers had been using rote memorization strategy, for the taught content, in order to get high grades, and this strategy was indirectly encouraged by some lecturers. Although in Islamic culture memorizing the Quran is very important for Muslims, it is clear for all Muslims that "Islam encourages creative learning through the use of all the intellectual abilities" (Kamil, 2011, p. 252). However, memorizing the taught content was not helpful for student-teachers' understanding and the practical application of knowledge. Therefore, a positive relationship between teacher-educators and their student-teachers needs to be developed to help them to be more confident and effective, not to be afraid about making errors and to be more confident about their learning. The educators need to develop a closer relationship with their student-teachers and to be flexible and more supportive. They could motivate their student-teachers to work better through effective feedback and by using more democratic approaches in a healthy academic environment.

Student-teachers identified types of approaches/models used by lecturers which were effective in their learning. Increasing opportunities to practise in group work and workshops, which enhance the quality of teaching and learning practices in the ECE programmes, is recommended. The assessment system of student-teachers' performance should be enhanced to help to improve the educational processes, for example, by changing and improving the examinations system. It was evident that these examinations were limited to measuring the amount of student-teachers' knowledge related to textbooks, rather than to measure their understanding of the subject and their critical thinking with regard to the knowledge they acquired from the programme. This requires the pre-service teacher-educators to change the style in which they write exams questions and the way in which they assess student-teachers' knowledge through exams papers.

1.2.2 Personal tutors and supervisors

Student-teachers identified that the current programme did not encourage the role of personal tutor as a facilitator. There were several problems that student-teachers faced during their teaching and learning, caused by the lack of a personal tutor for each group. These problems cannot be solved unless the ITE programmes leaders are informed of the importance of the role of personal tutors in advising and guiding student-teachers in their professional training.

Moreover, student-teachers need to discuss their progress, during their teaching practice period, with professional supervisors. Positive communication between the supervisor and trainee is required; therefore, supervisors should be professional in their provision of constructive feedback. Further areas for attention include obtaining sufficient numbers of qualified and trained staff to fulfil the requirements of the supervision system.

1.2.3 Librarians

The findings revealed that ITE programmes should encourage and provide student-teachers with access to library materials, as well as the use of ICT as a tool to support their studies and self-learning. Therefore, guidance is required from librarians for new student-teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the effective use of the library facilities. It is important to develop student-teachers' competence in using ICT, firstly, to enrich their pedagogical knowledge for teaching young children through technology, and secondly, as a pedagogical tool in their own teaching. It is clearly an issue in KSA, not just in training student-teachers in the efficient use of the library facilities and ICT, but also providing further training for the lecturers who teach student-teachers to use ICT. Since most universities in KSA are equipped with modern technology, pre-service teacher-educators should utilize these facilities to support their style of teaching, so they need to attend workshops on how to use technology to support their teaching.

1.3 School Level

1.3.1 Classroom teachers

In the kindergarten context, student-teachers apply their theoretical knowledge as a part of their ITE programme through their interactions with children. In this context, it

is expected that student-teachers learn from classroom teachers' experiences to build their own teaching experiences. Therefore, to enhance student-teacher preparation for teaching, to build their practical knowledge, and to develop their skills, it is not enough that student-teachers just observe under supervision what classroom teachers do with children. Classroom teachers should engage with them in ongoing conversations about teaching and learning in an authentic context. This is also a challenge for classroom teachers, as inspectors for student-teachers' teaching, to benefit from student-teachers' ideas and practices.

Moreover, classroom teachers are invited to meet lecturers at university to discuss the limitations and strengths of the student-teachers, and their progress regarding their understanding of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA. Importantly, lecturers are more focused on the core of the national kindergarten curriculum delivered through their lectures, which should be placed alongside the knowledge about ECE principles. In this respect, it was suggested by Abdelhfez (2010, p. 274) that ITE programmes should "provide contexts and methodologies" which are similar to the ones student-teachers "are expected to encounter when they start their teaching careers".

1.3.2 Senior management team

In order to foster a real partnership between kindergartens and universities, the senior management team at kindergartens needs to be invited to the universities, at least once each term, to meet the co-ordinators at the universities to discuss any constraints and challenges that student-teachers may face during their teaching practice regarding the educational system in the kindergarten, and how this system supports student-teachers' teaching practice. In this sense, the senior management teams need to be aware that the kindergartens would benefit from student-teachers being able to inform teaching development at kindergartens. This is because as young trainees they could bring updated knowledge and experience in the field of ECE. Therefore, the head-teachers should attempt to let the voices of the student-teachers be heard. They could listen to trainees' suggestions and try to take into account their desire to introduce positive changes. Furthermore, this team should make sure that student-teachers are aware of the terms of the official forms, which belong to the head-teacher and classroom teacher, for their assessment at the end of their teaching practice. This would help student-teachers to understand the nature of their work in the kindergarten community.

1.4 Student Level

1.4.1 Student-teachers in KSA

This study revealed that there was a need to engage student-teachers in revising and modifying the content of taught modules, which should reflect their perceived needs for their teaching practice, and any possible areas for change in their learning and teaching. The modified content should be based on an assessment of student-teachers' performance in the reality of their teaching and learning process in the educational contexts (university and kindergarten). In this case, there should be ongoing dialogue between student-teachers and their educators at all levels in the university, and this could be achieved through continuous meetings and seminars that are arranged for this purpose. This would enable the teacher-educators to be well-informed about the constraints and problems which face student-teachers in both contexts, and how they might address the gap between theory and practice.

Based on the findings of the current study, student-teachers should show a personal commitment to learning. So, they should be encouraged by their educators at university to be active learners and readers themselves, so that they read and research outside the course materials to develop their knowledge and experience. In this way, student-teachers would gradually develop greater understanding of self-learning approaches, and understand that they are educated to be life-long learners about teaching young children. In addition, they should understand that the educators' role is not like it used to be - "one of the major sources of knowledge for the students" (Kamil, 2011, p. 252). With the information and technology revolution, we all have to learn how to locate relevant material, how to evaluate its worth, and how to use it productively. Moreover, student-teachers should realize that the practical application of theoretical knowledge is a challenge, because they should be aware that the relationship between knowledge and practice is not linear.

1.5 Initial Teacher Education Programmes

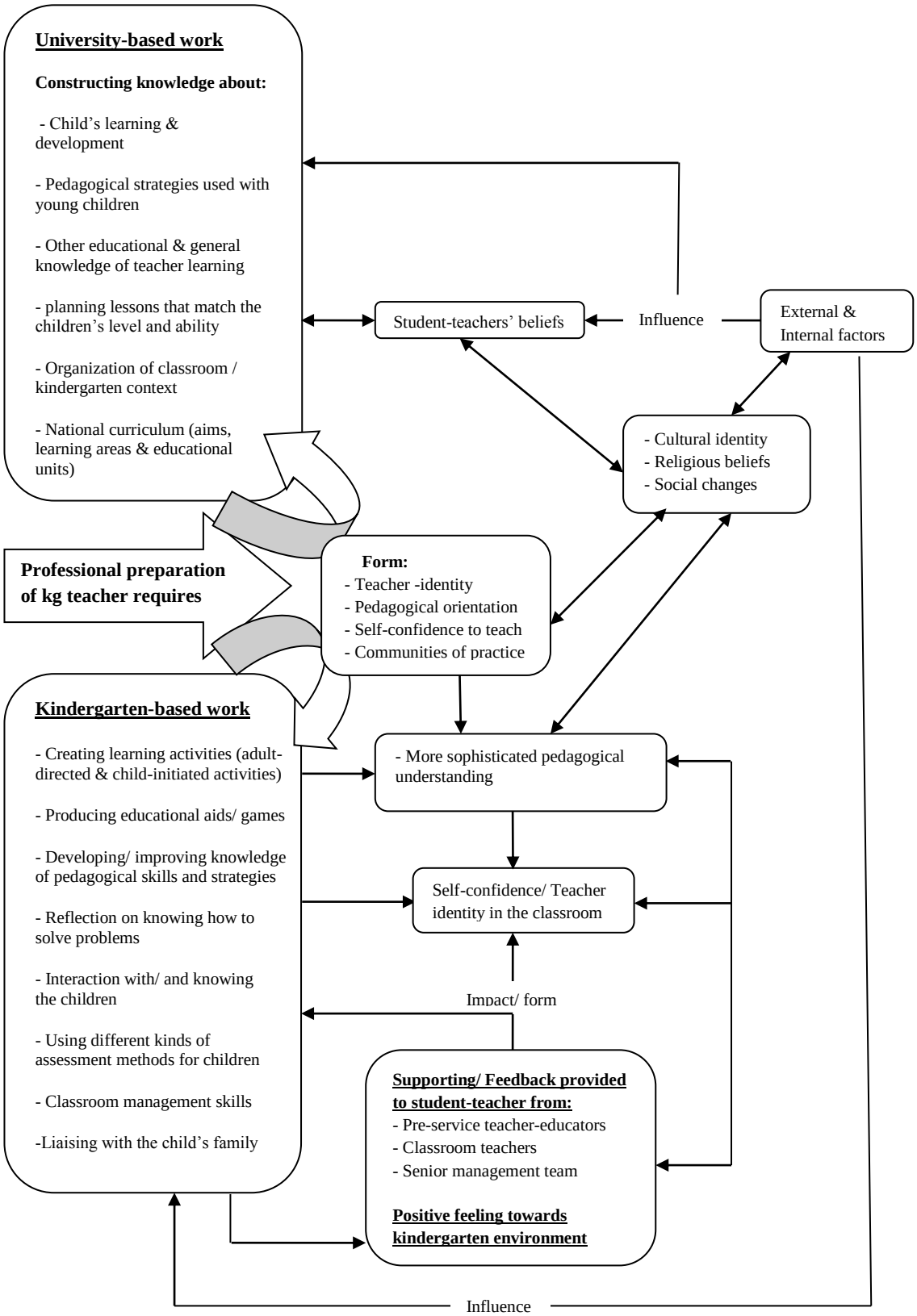
1.5.1 The structure, the curriculum, and the pedagogical approaches

From my data collection, I have taken those positive aspects mentioned by student-teachers that helped to prepare effective kindergarten teachers. These elements appeared in concept maps drawn up in Appendices I, J, K and L. To this I added ideas regarding the key influencing factors on student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs as

shown in the data and the literature. I then created a model showing how these influencing factors relate to the university and kindergarten-based elements of the programme.

The results are presented in a visual diagram (Figure 12.1) that is proposed as a model for improving the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers. Such a model could assist decision makers, practitioners and researchers in developing professional preparation programmes of IT in the field of ECE, which could help to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Consequently, student-teachers could become more actively involved in the kindergarten and university contexts. Thus, they could reflect on their teaching practice through their interaction with children and their observation of classroom teachers.

Figure 12.1 Model for the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers



Section 2: Suggestions for Further Research

It is suggested that the proposed model in this study is applied to find to what degree it is effective in improving the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers in KSA.

Moreover, further exploration is needed of the perspectives of teacher-educators in KSA towards the effective models of ITE in the Saudi context. In addition, research could focus on how much policy makers are aware of these models used in universities, and how might they enhance the quality of these models of teaching and learning. Also, research on the relationship between policy makers and policy implementers is suggested.

It is strongly suggested that researchers investigate in which way the ITE programmes enable student-teachers to develop a questioning mind, and how teacher-educators are trained to help student-teachers to become critical thinkers. In addition, an urgent investigation is needed to establish to what extent teacher-educators realize the importance of the use of technology in their teaching.

Further interesting research would be to investigate what approaches assist in developing the ability of student-teachers to learn independently, and also to explore the required research and study skills of undergraduate Saudi students for learning. In addition, there is an opportunity to investigate the challenges which face student-teachers in accessing library materials to support their studies, and in using ICT and the university Web programmes.

Since the findings showed that student-teachers' development in the teaching practice came from several sources, the researcher suggests that future researchers in KSA should investigate whether some of these are perceived as more important to student-teachers than others. Such research would help to develop ITE programmes and teaching practice, and may result in more positive outcomes with regard to children's learning and development. Finally, it is suggested that lecturers in this programme are interviewed to investigate whether their perspectives might differ from student-teachers' perspectives regarding the training of pre-service kindergarten teachers.

Section 3: Conclusion

Socio-cultural contexts and social interaction are fundamental factors in building the knowledge and beliefs of student-teachers in ITE. This study showed how cultural contexts played an important role in student-teachers' learning and practice, and how teacher identity reflected the wider social-cultural purposes of education in society, and the expectations of teachers' roles in society. Student-teachers developed their identity as teachers in different social contexts and educational communities (for example, at university, at school, and in their homes). In this way, they built both culturally valued knowledge of teaching and learning, and knowledge of ECE from their participation in these communities. They also constructed their identities as teachers and members in the society. Student-teachers' Saudi cultural identity, which is related to Islamic beliefs, was imposed strongly on their teaching practice with young children, when the KSA curriculum (The Self-Learning Curriculum) helped them to emphasize these beliefs. This is because the KSA curriculum aims to ensure that the activities the children are involved in are related to their culture and families and are in keeping with their experience of Islam and their religious beliefs. Therefore, it can be concluded that ITE programmes and socio-political contexts influence and shape student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs.

This study was based on empirical research in the field of ITE programmes. This type of research may have an influence on policy makers in KSA to enable teacher-educators to consider what effective models of ITE are. Policy-makers need to create polices that support and encourage teacher-educators to do this work. This is because student-teacher learning outcomes may be improved by applying effective models of ITE, which are not just based on the cultural reproduction of dominant ideas through university curricula, but also reflect the wider social and educational policy aspirations. These models encourage student-teachers' self-learning, questioning, creating, critical thinking and becoming reflective practitioners.

It has been emphasized by the findings that more experience in an authentic context played a vital role in student-teachers acquiring effective practical knowledge and experience in ECE. This suggests that the apprenticeship model in ITE programmes in

KSA needs to be revised because student-teachers need to become more involved in the practice context at an earlier stage. In turn, they would become more familiar with the kindergarten curriculum in KSA, learn more from classroom teachers' experiences and knowledge, and learn to interact with children more effectively.

Saudi Arabia is open to different ideas and influences, but a key priority in KSA is to make sure that our educational practices remain consistent with Islamic beliefs. What I am recommending is that the student-teachers have more time in schools because, firstly, extensive research evidence in the west has indicated that this is an effective way for student-teachers to learn to be teachers, and secondly, the participants in this study wanted more time at schools. So, the researcher is drawing on western recommendations about effective practice in ITE, but sees their application in accordance with the dominant cultural and religious beliefs of KSA. This does not mean that western ideas are being taken on board uncritically, but rather that the west is being looked to see what the most effective ways are through which student-teachers learn to become teachers; decisions are then made about whether and how to adapt these.

Appendices

Appendix A

College of Education
Department: Education and psychology
Major: Kindergarten
(Four-year programme/Eight academic levels)
The distribution of modules

First year

First academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
Islamic culture	2		2				
Writing & composition	2		2				
English language	3		3				
Health education	1		1				
Principles of administration	2		2				
Principles of psychology	2		2				
Principles of statistics	2		2				
Principles of education research	2		2				
Total			16	Total			0
Overall accredited hours for the first level = 16 hours							

Second academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
Principle of sociology	2		2	Entrance to kindergarten	2		2
Developmental psychology	2		2	Psychology of games	2		2
Introduction to education	2		2	The artistic education for the kindergarten child	2	2	3
				Child health and nutrition	2		2
				Introduction to special education	2		2
Total			6	Total			11
Overall accredited hours for the second academic level = 17 hours							

Second year

Third academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
Principles of the curricula	2		2	Curriculum of the kindergarten	2		2
Educational psychology	2		2	Social raising of the child	2		2
Literary appreciation	2		2	Design of educational games	2	2	3
				Rights of the child in Islam and contemporary legislations	2		2
				Environmental education	2		2
Total			6	Total			11
Overall accredited hours for the third academic level = 17 hours							

Fourth academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
Islamic creed & ethics	2		2	The methods of child's education	2		2
Producing and use of teaching aids	1	2	2	The problems of childhood	2		2
General teaching methods	2		2	The kindergarten teacher preparation	2	2	3
				The physical and kinetic education for the kindergarten child	2	2	3
				The development of creativity and gifted consideration	2		2
Total			6	Total			12
Overall accredited hours for the fourth academic level = 18 hours							

Third year

Fifth academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
The economic system in Islam	2		2	The child's cognitive growth	2		2
School administration	2		2	Museum and library of child	2		2
Special teaching skills	2		2	The child's culture	2		2
				Development of the scientific, environmental and athletic concepts	2	2	3
				The activities curriculum in kindergarten	2	2	3
Total			6	Total			12
Overall accredited hours for the fifth academic level = 18 hours							

Sixth academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
Use of computer in education	2		2	The development of linguistic skills	2	2	3
Development of education thought	2		2	The child's literature	2		2
				The development of the moral and social concepts	2	2	3
				Preparation of the child for reading and writing	2		2
				Learning disabilities	2		2
Total			4	Total			12
Overall accredited hours for the sixth academic level = 16 hours							

Fourth year

Seventh academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
Political system in Islam	2		2	The child's counselling and advising	2		2
Educational testing and evaluation	2		2	Programmes of preparation for the preschool child	2	2	3
Design & development of lessons	1	2	2	Kindergarten administration	2		2
				The child psychological health	2		2
				Field practice	1	2	3
Total			6	Total			12
Overall accredited hours for the seventh academic level = 18 hours							

Eighth academic level:

Educational and the general preparation modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours	Specialised modules	Theoretical hours	Practical hours	Credit hours
-	-	-	-	Teaching practice*	-	8	8
Total			0	Total			8

* The actual hours of teaching practice 16 hours

Appendix B

Longitudinal Study of Student-teachers Interviewed

Cohort	Sample	Reserve	Semester 1 (At the end) (2008/2009)	Semester 2 (At the end) (2008/2009)	Semester 1 (At the end) (2009/2010)
Year 1	8	2	Level 1 Entry (new student-teacher)	Level 2	Level 3
Year 2	8	2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Year 3	8	2	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Year 4	8	2	Level 7	Level 8 (teaching practice)	Exit(graduate)

Appendix C

Student-teacher Questionnaire for: The Professional Preparation, Knowledge and Beliefs of Kindergarten Teachers in Saudi Arabia

Dear student-teacher,

I am a lecturer at King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia, and currently undertaking PhD research at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom. The study aims to understand the professional preparation of kindergarten teachers at the College of Education in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) from the point of view of the student-teachers.

I would like to ask for your cooperation in answering this questionnaire, as it is decisive to the success of this study. Your involvement will be appreciated and your participation will be kept completely confidential and your identity anonymous. Your answers will be used only for research purposes. If you do not wish to be involved in this study, please simply hand the questionnaire back to me.

This questionnaire consists of five parts as follows:

Part one: General information
Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers
Part three: Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers
Part four: Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme
Part five: Further comments

Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation

Yours truly,

Nadia A. Al-Jadidi
PhD research student
Email: naljadidi222@hotmail.com

Part one: General information

Please tick the box that represents your response (*choose <u>one</u> option only*)

1. Currently, I am enrolled in the

First study year	□	level 1	or	□ level 2
Second study year	□	level 3	or	□ level 4
Third study year	□	level 5	or	□ level 6
Fourth study year	□	level 7	or	□ level 8

2. I am
   - □ Interested in working with pre-school children
   - □ Not interested in working with pre-school children

3. Your reasons for joining the kindergarten programme at the College of Education

- ……..……
- ……..
- ……..

4. What do you think so far about the content of modules taught in your major?

   - □ Useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children
   - □ Not useful as a preparation for working with pre-school children
   - □ Some of them are useful and some need to be reconsidered

5. Why do you think that the content of the modules are useful or not useful?

……
……
……
……
……..

Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

1. Knowledge of children's learning and development

Please mark (√) to indicate your opinion whether student-teachers in their Kindergarten Major programme should have knowledge about the following:

	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
6	child development theories					
7	pre-school child characteristics					
8	Children's needs and how teachers meet those needs					
9	supporting child's moral, mental, physical growth in a natural environment similar to child's family environment					
10	supporting children's Islamic religious beliefs in the oneness of God					
11	play and the importance of play in kindergarten child's learning					
12	pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children					
13	the methods of child raising					
14	childhood problems and how to handle educational and behavioural problems					
15	child protection against dangers					
16	how to interact with children and adults at kindergarten, and parents					
17	roles and functions of a kindergarten teacher in field experience (teaching context)					
18	child preparation for transition to primary school life					
19	aims and content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia					

2. Knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

Please mark (√) to indicate your opinion whether student-teachers in their Kindergarten Major programme should be adequately trained to do the following:

	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
20	provide children with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their age					
21	create appropriate activities whether inside or outside the classroom for children's abilities					
22	plan group and individual activities for kindergarten children					
23	plan child-initiated activities, including play					
24	plan adult-directed activities					

25	design activities fostering intellectual development of kindergarten children					
26	design activities fostering motor/physical skills of kindergarten children					
27	design activities fostering emotional development of kindergarten children					
28	design activities associated with child's learning of the scientific and mathematical concepts					
29	design activities associated with development of the linguistic skills of kindergarten children					
30	design activities that contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of kindergarten children					
31	design activities to foster the KSA cultural customs and beliefs of kindergarten children					
32	design activities to prepare the child for reading and writing					
33	design and produce educational aids appropriate for kindergarten children					
34	design and produce educational games appropriate for kindergarten children					
35	use local materials properly to design educational activities					
36	acquire educational qualifications that distinguish them from other stage teachers					
37	design educational context to enable children to learn					
38	teach the subject areas of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA					
39	assess children's learning and development across the KSA national curriculum					
40	manage classrooms effectively					
41	encourage children's imaginative thinking					
42	design educational unit for kindergarten children					
43	design and manage the kindergarten programme					

Part three: Perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

Please mark (√) to indicate your opinion on the following statements:
(About the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers)

	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
44	programme adequately covers all academic subjects which are relevant to early childhood stage					
45	programme design is beneficial because it includes theoretical and practical sessions					
46	programme gives student-teachers the knowledge and skills to teach pre-school children					

47	teaching modules in this programme is progressive and well organized					
48	time scale of the programme (8 levels/4 years, consisting of 56 modules) enables student-teachers to be sufficiently prepared for teaching					
49	all educational and the general preparation modules (50 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge					
50	all specialized modules (78 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge					

Part four: Perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

This part explores student-teachers' views about the constraints that affect the effectiveness of the Kindergarten Major programme at the College of Education (please mark (√) to indicate your opinion)

	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
51	non-compliance of the student-teacher for studying previous requirements					
52	number of student-teachers in class is very large					
53	lack of interest among some student-teachers to work with pre-school children					
54	learning environment at the college doesn't encourage learning and sound understanding					
55	the university web doesn't provide adequately the necessary information about the modules					
56	lack of kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers					

Part five: Further comments

Please add any further comments about the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

……
……
……
……

Thank you again very much for your participation and cooperation

Arabic Copy

إستمارة الطالبة عن: الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال في المملكة العربية السعودية, خبراتهن ومعتقداتهن

أختي الطالبة **المحترمة**
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

في إطار إعدادي لمشروع بحث الدكتوراه في جامعة اكستر بالمملكة المتحدة. تحت عنوان " الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال في المملكة العربية السعودية, خبراتهن ومعتقداتهن ".

الهدف من الدراسة هو فهم كيف يتم الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال من وجهة نظر الطالبات الدارسات في كلية التربية/ تخصص رياض الأطفال. والى أي مدى ممكن ان تكون خبراتهن ومعتقداتهن مختلفة باختلاف سنوات الدراسة.

اطلب تعاونك للإجابة على هذه الاستمارة, كما أن مشاركتك ستقدر عاليا وسيتعامل معها بسرية تامة كما ان هويتك ستبقى مجهولة و إجابتك لن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي. وفي حاله عدم رغبتك اختي الطالبه بالمشاركه في تعبئه الإستماره, فيمكن ارجاعها للباحث.

تتكون الاستمارة من خمسة أجزاء كالتالي:
أولا: معلومات عامة
ثانيا: وجهة نظر الطالبات حول خبراتهن في برنامج الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الاطفال
ثالثا: وجهة نظر الطالبات حول برنامج الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال
رابعا: المعوقات الداخلية والخارجية التي تؤثر على البرنامج
خامسا: تعليقات اضافية

وتقبلوا مني فائق التقدير والاحترام لتعاونكن

مقدمته

نادية بنت احمد الجديدي
محاضرة وطالبة بحث دكتوراه
naljadidi222@hotmail.com

أولا: معلومـــــات عـامة
من فضلك ضعي علامة (√) في المربع الذي يمثل إجابتك *(اختاري إجابة واحدة فقط)*

1. حاليا أنا طالبة في :

السنة الدراسية الأولى ☐ مستوى أول أو ☐ مستوى ثاني
السنة الدراسية الثانية ☐ مستوى ثالث أو ☐ مستوى رابع
السنة الدراسية الثالثة ☐ مستوى خامس أو ☐ مستوى سادس
السنة الدراسية الرابعة ☐ مستوى سابع أو ☐ مستوى ثامن

2. أنا

☐ لديَّ الرغبة في العمل مع أطفال ما قبل المدرسة
☐ لا أرغب في العمل مع أطفال ما قبل المدرسة

3. أسباب انضمامك لتخصص رياض الأطفال بكلية التربية

- .....
- .....
- .....

4. من وجهه نظرك، محتويات المقررات الدراسية التي تدرسينها في تخصصك رياض الأطفال

☐ مفيدة لإعداد الطالبات للعمل مع أطفال ما قبل المدرسة
☐ غير مفيدة لإعداد الطالبات للعمل مع أطفال ما قبل المدرسة
☐ بعض منها مفيدة والبعض منها تحتاج لإعادة النظر فيها

5. بناء على اختيارك للإجابة في السؤال رقم (4) لماذا تعتقدين ذلك:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

ثانيا: وجهة نظر الطالبات حول خبراتهن في برنامج الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال

1- خبرات الطالبات عن تطور وتعليم الطفل

من فضلك ضعي علامة (√) أمام الخيار الذي تعتقدين انه يعبر عن رأيك في اهميه امتلاك طالبات تخصص رياض الاطفال للمعرفه في النقاط التاليه:

م	البنود	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
		5	4	3	2	1
6	نظريات نمو الطفل					
7	خصائص طفل الروضة					
8	حاجات الأطفال وكيف تلبى هذه الحاجات					
9	رعاية نمو الطفل جسميا وعقليا وخلقيا في بيئة تكون مشابهة لبيئة الطفل العائلية					
10	دعم المعتقدات الدينية الإسلامية للأطفال القائمة على التوحيد					
11	اللعب وأهمية اللعب في عملية تعليم طفل الروضة					
12	الاستراتيجيات التربوية التي تستخدم في تدريس الأطفال الصغار					
13	أساليب تربية الطفل					
14	مشكلات الطفولة وكيفية مواجهة المشكلات السلوكية والتربوية					
15	حماية الطفل من الأخطار					
16	كيف يتفاعلن مع الأطفال والعاملين في الروضة وأولياء الأمور					
17	ادوار ومهام معلمة الروضة في حقل التجربة الميدانية (بيئة التدريس)					
18	تهيئة الطفل للانتقال إلى حياة المدرسة الأبتدائية					
19	أهداف و محتوى منهج الروضة في السعودية					

2- خبرات الطالبات عن المحتوى التربوي ومنهج الروضة في المملكة العربية السعودية

من فضلك ضعي علامة (√) أمام الخيار الذي تعتقدين انه يعبر عن رأيك في اهميه التدريب الكافي لطالبات تخصص رياض الاطفال في النقاط التالي:

م	البنود	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
		5	4	3	2	1
20	يزودنّ الأطفال بحصيلة من المعلومات والمهارات المناسبة لسنهم					
21	يبتكرنّ نشاطات مناسبة لقدرات الأطفال التي تتم خارج أو داخل الغرفة الصفية					
22	يخططنّ الأنشطة الجماعية والفردية لأطفال الروضة					
23	يخططنّ الأنشطة التي يكون فيها الطفل هو المبادر في النشاط (التعلم الذاتي) متضمنا اللعب					
24	يخططنّ الأنشطة التي تكون فيها المعلمة هي المبادرة في عملية التعليم وتوجيه الطفل					
25	يصممنّ أنشطة تعزيز النمو العقلي لأطفال الروضة					
26	يصممنّ أنشطة تعزيز المهارات البدنية والحركية لأطفال الروضة					
27	يصممنّ أنشطة تعزيز النمو الانفعالي (الوجداني) لأطفال الروضة					
28	يصممنّ الأنشطة المرتبطة بتعليم الطفل المفاهيم العلمية والرياضية					
29	يصممنّ الأنشطة المرتبطة بتنمية المهارات اللغوية لأطفال الروضة					
30	يصممنّ الأنشطة التي تساهم في تنمية المفاهيم الأجتماعية والخلقية لأطفال الروضة					

31	يصممنّ أنشطة تعزيز المعتقدات والعادات الثقافية السعودية لأطفال الروضة					
32	يصممنّ أنشطة تهيئة الطفل للقراءة والكتابة					
33	يصممنّ و ينتجنّ الوسائل التعليمية الملائمة لأطفال الروضة					
34	يصممنّ و ينتجنّ الألعاب التربوية الملائمة لأطفال الروضة					
35	يستخدمنّ خامات البيئة بصورة صحيحة لتصميم الأنشطة التعليمية					
36	يكتسبنّ المؤهلات التربوية التي تميزهن عن معلمات المراحل الأخرى					
37	يصممنّ بيئة تربوية مناسبة لتعليم الأطفال					
38	يُدرسنّ جوانب تعليم الطفل في منهج الروضة في السعودية					
39	يقيمنّ تعلم وتطور الأطفال عبر منهج الروضة في السعودية					
40	يدرنّ غرفة النشاط في الروضة على نحو فعال					
41	يشجعنّ التفكير الأبتكاري للأطفال					
42	يصممنّ وحدة تعليمية لأطفال الروضة					
43	يصممنّ و يدرنّ برامج الروضة					

ثالثا: وجهة نظر الطالبات حول برنامج الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال

من فضلك ضعي علامة (√) أمام الخيار الذي تعتقدين انه يعبر عن رأيك حول برنامج الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال

م	البنود	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لاأوافق بشدة
		5	4	3	2	1
44	البرنامج يغطي بشكل كافي كل المواضيع الأكاديمية المرتبطة بمرحلة الطفولة المبكرة					
45	تصميم البرنامج مفيد لأنة يتضمن ساعات نظرية وعملية					
46	البرنامج يقدم للطالبات المعلومات والمهارات لتدريس اطفال الروضة					
47	تدريس المقررات في هذا البرنامج يكون بشكل تدريجي ومنظم تنظيما جيدا					
48	الفترة الزمنية للبرنامج (8 مستويات /4 سنوات دراسية, والذي يكون مع 56 مقرراً) تعد كافية لإعداد الطالبات للتدريس					
49	جميع المقررات التربوية والإعداد العام (50 ساعة دراسية نظرية وعملية) مفيدة لتطوير معارف الطالبات					
50	جميع المقررات التخصصية (78 ساعة دراسية نظرية وعملية) مفيدة لتطوير معارف الطالبات					

رابعا: المعوقات الداخلية والخارجية التي تؤثر على البرنامج

من فضلك ضع علامة (√) أمام العبارات التي من وجهة نظرك تعتبر من **المعوقات التي تؤثر على فاعلية برنامج تخصص رياض الأطفال في كلية التربية**

م	البنود	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
		5	4	3	2	1
51	عدم التزام الطالبات بدراسة المتطلبات السابقة					
52	عدد الطالبات في القاعة كبير جدا					
53	ضعف رغبة بعض الطالبات في العمل مع أطفال الروضة					
54	البيئة التعليمية في الكلية لا تشجع على التعليم والفهم الصحيح					
55	موقع الجامعة الالكتروني لا يقدم المعلومات الضرورية بشكل كافي عن المقررات الدراسية					
56	عدم توفر روضة ملحقة بالكلية لتدريب الطالبات بها					

خامسا: تعليقات اضافية

الرجاء اضافة أي تعليقات أخرى عن برنامج الاعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الاطفال

.....
.....
.....
.....

ولكنَ مني جزيل الشكر والأمتنان لمشاركتكن

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Student-teachers' Knowledge and Beliefs for:
The Professional Preparation of kindergarten Teachers in Saudi Arabia

Interview protocol

- A brief introduction about the researcher's background
- Introduction to the research aim and objectives
- Ensuring confidentiality
- Instructions to the interview: sections; type of questions
- Conclusion- thanking the interviewee for her participation

Part 1: General Information

1. What is your study year/and at which level of study are you in Kindergarten Major?
2. Why did you join the Kindergarten Major at College of Education?

Part 2: Programme Content (Subject Matter and Pedagogical Strategies)

3. How useful are the modules you study in preparing you to become kindergarten teacher?

4. With regard to the content of the modules, to what extent are you able to make connections between the theoretical content, and the practical application? Can you give examples of these connections?

5. What are you expected to know at the beginning of your teaching practice?

   Prompt: Can you give me a little more explanation about your knowledge around child development and how children learn?

   Prompt: What is the range of pedagogical strategies that you are learning to use with young children?

Part 3: Teaching Styles at the University and their Effectiveness

6. What methods and strategies are used in teaching modules in your Major?

   Prompt: What do you find most effective for your own learning? Why?

Part 4: The Teaching/Learning Environment at the University

7. What characteristics of your professional preparation do you find most useful, including modules, lecturers and teaching/learning environment?

8. What characteristics of your professional preparation do you find less useful, including modules, lecturers and teaching/learning environment?

Part 5: Influences on the Educational Process

9. What are the main change factors in your knowledge/beliefs during your professional preparation as kindergarten teacher in the Kindergarten Major?

10. Are there any difficulties/issues you are facing in your Major?

11. Do you want to add any suggestions or comments that could benefit your Major?

Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation

Arabic Copy

استمارة المقابلة الشخصية للطالبات لمعرفة وجهة نظرهنَ عن: إعدادهن المهني كمعلمات رياض أطفال

مراسيم المقابلة

- نبذة مختصرة عن الباحث
- نبذة مختصرة عن اهداف البحث
- تأكيد السرية
- فكرة مختصرة عن نوعية الأسئله المطروحة
- بنهاية المقابلة يقدم الشكر للطالبة المشاركة

أولا: معلومات عامة

1- في أي سنة دراسية؟ وفي أي مستوى؟

2- لماذا اخترت الإنضمام لبرنامج رياض الأطفال في كلية التربية ؟

ثانيا: محتوى البرنامج

3- إلى أي مدى تعتقدين أن المقررات التي تدريسينها مفيدة لتكوني معلمة رياض أطفال ؟

4- الى اي مدي محتوى المقررات يجعلك قادرة على ربط الجانب النظري بالعملي؟ هل تستطيعي ان تعطي امثلة لذلك ؟

5- ماهي الخبرات التي تتوقعين ان تكتسبيها قبل شروعك بالتربية العملية؟

أ) هل تستطيعي أن تعطي تفاصيل اكثر حول تطور نمو الطفل وكيف يتعلم ؟

ب) ماهي الاستراتيجيات التربوية التي تستخدم مع الأطفال؟

ثالثا: طرق التدريس و فاعليتها

6- في المقررات الدراسية التي تكون مدرَسة في تخصصك, هل يمكن أن تتحدثي عن أساليب التدريس المستخدمة؟

أ) ما الذي تجدينه أكثر فعالية ومؤثر في تعليمك ؟ ولماذا؟

رابعا: بيئة التدريس والتعليم

7- ما هي الصفات المميزة لإعدادك المهني والتي تكونين أكثر سرور معها, متضمنا المقررات الدراسية والأساتذة وبيئة التدريس والتعليم؟

8- ما هي الصفات المميزة لإعدادك المهني والتي تكونين اقل سرور معها, متضمنا المقررات الدراسية والأساتذة وبيئة التدريس والتعليم؟

خامسا: العوامل المؤثرة في العملية التعليمية

9- ما هي أهم عوامل التغيير في معرفتك ومعتقداتك خلال إعدادك المهني كمعلمة رياض أطفال؟

10- هل هنالك أي صعوبات أو معوقات تواجهيها في تخصصك؟

11- هل تريدين إضافة أي مقترحات أو تعليقات ممكن أن تفيد الدراسة؟

ولكي مني جزيل الشكر لتعاونك

Appendix E

Student-teachers' Interview Questions (in Teaching Practice) for: Their Professional Preparation as Kindergarten Teachers

Interview protocol

- A brief introduction about the researcher's background
- Introduction of the research aim and objectives
- Ensuring confidentiality
- Instructions of the interview: type of questions
- Conclusion- thanking the interviewee for her participation

1- What knowledge do you have of the aims of the KSA kindergarten curriculum?

2- What knowledge do you have of the learning areas/educational units of the KSA kindergarten curriculum?

3- What knowledge do you have of the best approaches to teaching and learning for kindergarten children?

4- In courses that are taught in your Kindergarten Major, in what concepts and experiences did these courses prepare you to teach the KSA kindergarten curriculum?

5- How confident are you in classroom about your skills and knowledge in your specialist core subject to teach and assess children across the KSA kindergarten curriculum? Prompt: Have you been able to use and apply the knowledge and skills?

6- From your teaching practice, can you talk about a lesson that you taught well? Prompt: Do you think that you applied appropriate methods of teaching children?

7- Can you tell me about another lesson that you did not teach well? Prompt: How could this lesson have been planned and taught in better ways?

8- To what extent did your supervisor/class teachers and kindergarten administration support your development during your teaching practice? Prompt: What was most helpful?

9- What is your thinking about your teaching practice at the very beginning and today? For example, Are your teaching methods changing; what were the factors influencing this change?

10- In what ways do you need to improve your teaching practice?

11- What do you think are the main styles and approaches that you use in terms of teaching performance and interaction with children?

12- What are some of the challenges you are facing in teaching practice?

13- Can you evaluate yourself after a lesson? How?

14- Do you find yourself in need for additional input to the module content which was taught at the university? Which ones, if any?

15- Are there any courses which were not useful for your preparation as kindergarten teacher? Which ones, if any?

16- Would you like to add or suggest anything else about your professional preparation as kindergarten teacher?

Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation

Arabic Copy

أسئلة المقابلة الشخصية للطالبات (في التربية العملية) لمعرفة وجهة نظرهن عن: إعدادهن المهني كمعلمات رياض أطفال

مراسيم المقابلة

- نبذة مختصرة عن الباحث
- نبذة مختصرة عن اهداف البحث
- تأكيد السرية
- فكرة مختصرة عن نوعية الأسئله المطروحة
- بنهاية المقابلة يقدم الشكر للطالبة المشاركة

1- ما معلوماتك عن أهداف منهج الروضة في المملكة العربية السعودية؟

2- ما معلوماتك عن جوانب تعليم طفل الروضة وعن الوحدات التعليمية في منهج الروضة في المملكة العربية السعودية؟

3- ما معلوماتك عن أفضل الطرق لتعليم أطفال الروضة؟

4- ماهي الخبرات والمفاهيم التي اكتسبتيها من المقررات الدراسية التي تدرّس في تخصصك رياض الأطفال والتي أعدتك لتدريس منهج الروضة في المملكة العربية السعودية ؟

5- إلى أي مدى تكونين واثقة في غرفة النشاط بالروضة حول مهاراتك ومعلوماتك عن مواضيع التخصص لتعليم/ وتقييم الأطفال عبر منهج الروضة في المملكة العربية السعودية؟ هل أنت قادرة على استخدام وتطبيق هذه المهارات و المعلومات ؟ وضحي ذلك؟

6- من خبرتك في التربية العملية، هل تستطيعين أن تخبريننني عن نشاط (درس) تم تأديته (تدريسه) بشكل جيد وتعتقدين أنة كان ناجح؟ هل تعتقدين انك استخدمت الطرق المناسبة في هذا النشاط لتعليم الأطفال؟ وضحي ذلك؟

7- هل تستطيعين أن تخبريننني عن نشاط آخر لم تطبقينه (تدرسيه) بشكل جيد وتعتقدين أنة غير ناجح؟ من وجهة نظرك، كيف ممكن لهذا النشاط (الدرس) أن يكون مخطط ومدرّس بطريقة أفضل؟

8- إلى أي مدى مشرفتك التربوية /معلمات الفصل/إدارة الروضة يدعمون تطورك أثناء مرحلة تطبيقك؟

9- حددي أوجه الإفادة؟ ما رأيك في مستوى أدائك في التربية العملية منذُ بداية التطبيق والآن؟ مثلا: هل طرق التدريس التي تستخدمينها تغيرت, ما هي العوامل المؤثرة في هذا التغيير؟

10- ما هي الأشياء التي تحتاجينها حتى يتحسن تطبيقك العملي؟

11- في رأيك ، ما أهم الطرق والأساليب التي تستخدمينها في التفاعل مع الأطفال؟

12- ما التحديات التي تواجهينها في التربية العملية؟

13- هل تستطيعين تقويم نفسك ذاتيا بعد الانتهاء من شرح الدرس؟ كيف؟

14- هل تجدي نفسك في حاجة إلى جرعات إضافية من المحتوى الذي درسته في الجامعة؟ اذكريها أن وجدت؟

15- هل هنالك أي مقررات لم تستفيدين منها في إعدادك كمعلمة رياض أطفال؟ اذكريها إن وجدت مع التوضيح؟

16- هل ترغبين في إضافة أو اقتراح أي شيء آخر عن إعدادك المهني كمعلمة رياض أطفال؟

ولكي مني جزيل الشكر لتعاونك

Appendix F

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

School of Education and Lifelong Learning

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS
You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, then have it signed by your supervisor and by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guides.php and view the School's statement in your handbooks.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter).
DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND

Your name: Nadia AL-Jadidi

Your student no: 550000216

Degree/Programme of Study: PhD Education 4 year

Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Elizabeth Wood / Dr. Fran Martin

Your email address: N.AL-Jadidi@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07767241444

Title of your project: The professional preparation, Knowledge and beliefs of kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia

Brief description of your research project: the research methodology is interpretive with a case study design. There is a focus on the nature of student-teachers' knowledge and beliefs, how their knowledge bases for teaching and learning develop through their professional preparation as kindergarten teachers, and what their beliefs are about subjects, pedagogy, child learning and kindergarten curriculum in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) during their professional preparation programme.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved): The main group of participants are student-teachers. All these are females aged between 19 and 24 years old and their ethnic background is Saudi. They are students at a College of

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Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: September 2007

Education (COE) in KSA. The sample size for the detailed case study is 32 student-teachers. The researcher will select equal numbers (eight student-teachers) from each study year (first year, second year, third year and fourth year) for a longitudinal study. So the sampling is stratified sampling because the participants in this study are divided into four study levels. These student-teachers are followed for a period of three terms.

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs): The researcher requested informed consent from the participants (student-teachers, professors and supervisors of student-teacher in teaching practice) for their involvement. The researcher ensured that these participants understood the nature of the research and the process in which they will be engaged prior to the start of the research, "including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported" (BERA, 2004). According to BERA (2004) the researcher made clear to the participants that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time if they so wish. Hence, participants understood and consented to their participation, and fully understand its implications. Furthermore, participants need to be aware that the researcher has a duty to disclose to the appropriate authorities any illegal behaviour which may arise during the research (Ibid, 2004). Confidentiality and anonymity are taken into consideration in the study. The researcher did not identify the participants or the college/university or the kindergartens which is involved. Student-teachers are represented in this study by letters; A_1, B_1, C_1, D_1, E_1, F_1, G_1, H_1 for year 1, and A_2, B_2, C_2, D_2, E_2, F_2, G_2, H_2 for year 2, etc. Because there are recordings of extracts from participants' comments and anonymous conversations, the researcher ensures that she has permission from her participants for these extracts to be published.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress: The data collection methods used are questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis of both the pre-school curriculum in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the curriculum content for trainee kindergarten teachers at the College of Education (COE).

The quantitative data analysis: Descriptive statistical test are applied, using the Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software, to summarise the results of the analysis of the closed questions in the questionnaires. The qualitative data analysis: All interviews are recorded by using audio recording, and they are transcribed after the interview. These transcripts are provided to each of the participant before the start of the next interview for their scrutiny, confirmation or criticism.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: September 2007

***This form should now be printed out**, signed by you below and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given above and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:.....**date:** 1.6.2009

***N.B**. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor*

This project has been approved for the period: 2.06.2009 **until:** 31.3.2012

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): E.A. Wood **date:** 16.3.2012

***N.B. To Supervisor:** Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.*

SELL unique approval reference: D/08/09/58

Signed:.....**date:** 02/06/2009
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from
http://www.education.ex.ac.uk/students/index.php then click on On-line documents.

Appendix G

Seeking Permission for Taking Photos of Children's Activities at Kindergartens

سعادة عميد كلية العلوم الزراعية والأغذية المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

إنا المحاضرة نادية بنت احمد الجديدي المبتعثة من كلية العلوم الزراعية والأغذية/ قسم الاقتصاد المنزلي لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في تخصص الأسرة ونمو الطفل بجامعة اكستر ببريطانيا.

علية فأنني بحاجة إلى تصوير بعض الأنشطة برياض الأطفال لتضمينها في رسالتي لنيل درجة الدكتوراه والتي بعنوان "الإعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال بالمملكة العربية السعودية, معرفتهن و معتقداتهن" . حيث أن هذه الأنشطة مقدمة للأطفال من قبل بعض من عينة البحث المتدربات برياض الأطفال (حيث لا يتجاوز عددهن 8 طالبات في تخصص رياض الأطفال/ في مرحلة التربية العملية).

وحيث يتطلب الأمر موافقة الجهة المسئولة عن رياض الأطفال بمنطقة الأحساء (مدير عام التربية والتعليم للبنات بالأحساء) , آمل من سعادتكم مخاطبة الجهة المسئولة لمنحي الموافقة حيال ذلك.

وتقبلوا مني فائق التقدير والاحترام

مقدمته

نادية بنت احمد الجديدي

Nadia

محاضرة وطالبة بحث دكتوراه

naljadidi222@hotmail.com

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY
College of Agricultural & Food Sciences

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الملك فيصل
كلية العلوم الزراعية والأغذية

الرقم: ٩/٤٥/٢/ ٩٥ التاريخ: ٢٨/١١/١٤٣٠هـ المرفقات: (٢) ورقة

المحترم **سعادة مدير عام تربية وتعليم البنات بمحافظة الأحساء**

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

إشارة الى خطاب وكيلة الكلية للشؤون الأكاديمية والإدارية رقم ١٩٥/٢/١٢ وتاريخ ١٤٣٠/١١/٢٦هـ وبرفقه الخطاب المقدم من المحاضرة/ نادية بنت أحمد الجديدي والمبتعثة من الكلية/ قسم الاقتصاد المنزلي لنيل درجة الدكتوراة في تخصص الأسرة ونمو الطفل بجامعة أكستر ببريطانيا.

آمل التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الطالبة المذكورة للحصول على تصوير بعض الأنشطة برياض الأطفال لتضمينها في رسالة الدكتوراة .. شاكرين ومقدرين كريم تعاونكم لما فيه المصلحة العامة .

وتقبلوا خالص تحياتي ،،،

عميد كلية العلوم الزراعية والأغذية

١١/٢٨

د. محمد بن عبدالله العويقير

- صورة لسعادة الدكتورة وكيلة الكلية للشؤون الأكاديمية والإدارية لشئون الطالبات

٢٨ /ع ٣٠ - ١٦
ع.العميد

مطابع جامعة الملك فيصل ٥٠ 726

ص.ب ٤٢٠ الأحساء ٣١٩٨٢- المملكة العربية السعودية - هاتف ٥٨٠٠٠٠٠ (٠٣)- فاكس - ٥٨٠١٧٧٨ (٠٣)
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المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
(٢٨٠)
الإدارة العامة لتربية وتعليم البنات بالأحساء
مساعدة المدير العام للشؤون التعليمية

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
وزارة التربية والتعليم
Ministry of education

الرقم: ٢٠٠٠/٢٣٤٨
التاريخ: ١٤٣١/١١/١٠
المرفقات: ٣

الموضوع : بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحثة / نادية أحمد الجديدي

سعادة عميد كلية العلوم الزراعية والأغذية وفقه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

بناءً على خطاب سعادتكم رقم ٩٥/٤٥/٩ في ١٤٣١/١١/٢٨هـ بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحثة/ نادية أحمد الجديدي ، عليه نحيط سعادتكم علماً بأنه قد تم تسهيل أمر المذكورة في حينه ، وتواصلت مع الأخوات في رياض الأطفال للحصول على ما تريد تضمينه في رسالتها . شاكرين ومقدرين لها ما أضافته وما ستضفيه لتطوير رياض الأطفال .

وتقبلوا تحياتنا ،،،

المدير العام لتربية وتعليم البنات بالأحساء
محمد بن إبراهيم الملحم / عنه
المساعدة للشئون التعليمية
نورة صالح العمران

وزارة التربية والتعليم
الإدارة العامة لتربية وتعليم البنات بالأحساء
مساعد المدير العام للشؤون التعليمية

Request for Approval from the Parents of Children

السلام عليكم ورحمه الله وبركاته

إلـى وليـ (ـة) أمر الطفل/ ....

نود أن نفيدكم علمـا بأنه سوف يتـم تصوير الطفل في الأنشطة وذلك لدعم رسالة الباحثه/

ناديه الجديدي

بعنوان (الأعداد المهني لمعلمات رياض الأطفال في المملكة العربية السعودية, خبراتهن ومعتقداتهن) .. فنرجـو إفادتنـا أن كنتم راغبين بذلك ..

☐ أوافق ☐ لا أوافق

اسم الروضة .....

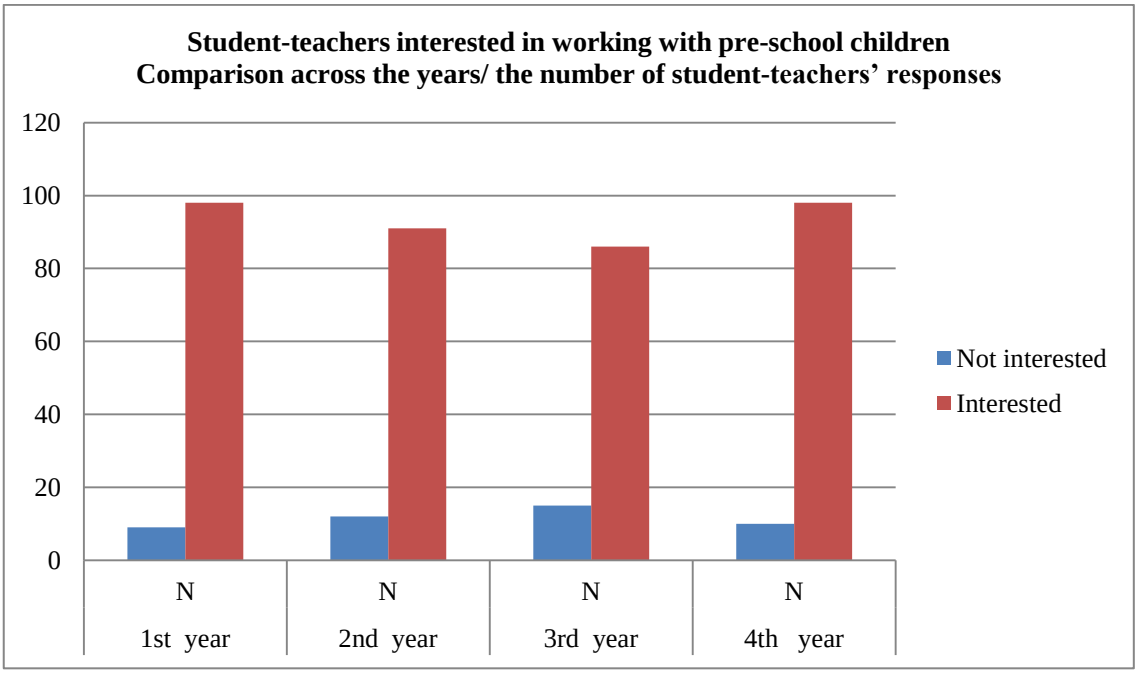
Appendix H

Summary of Questionnaire Findings across the Four Years

Part one: General information

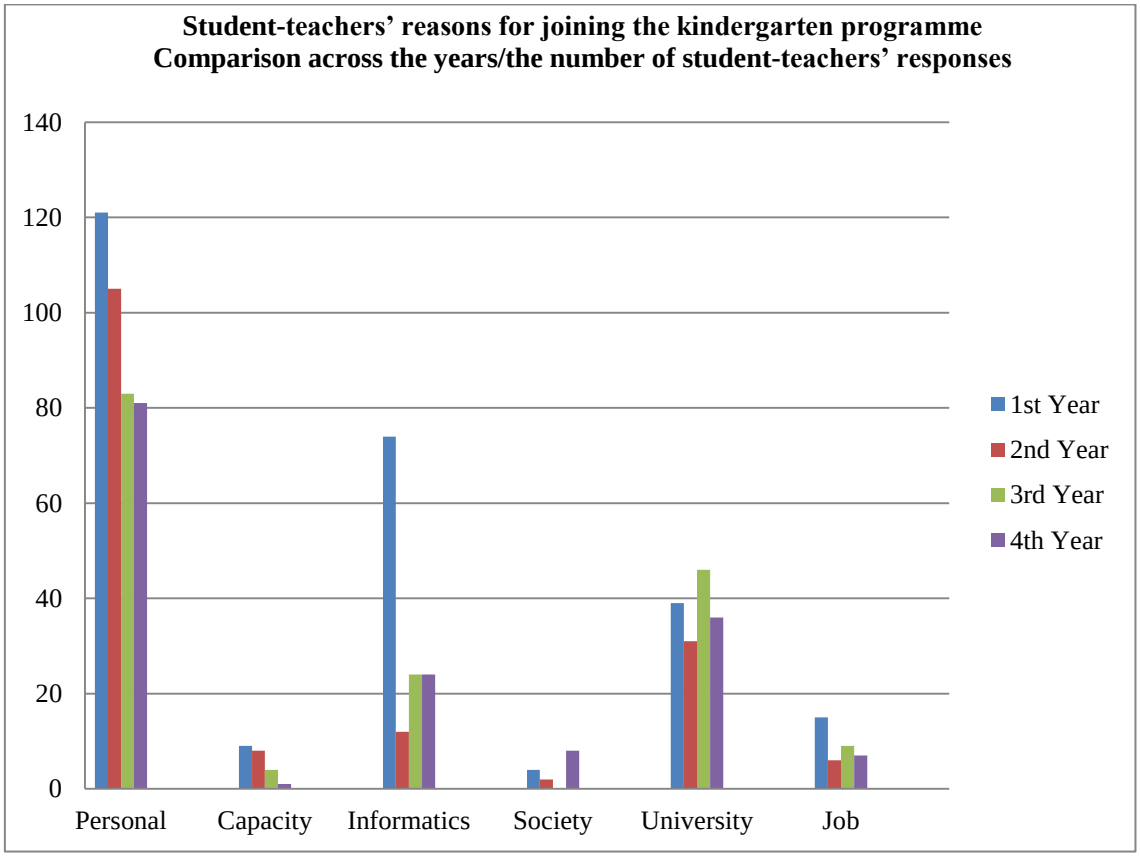
Student-teachers interested in working with pre-school children
Comparison across the years/the number of student-teachers' responses

interesting	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not interested	9	8.4	12	11.7	15	14.9	10	9.3
Interested	98	91.6	91	88.3	86	85.1	98	90.7
Total	107	100.0	103	100.0	101	100.0	108	100.0



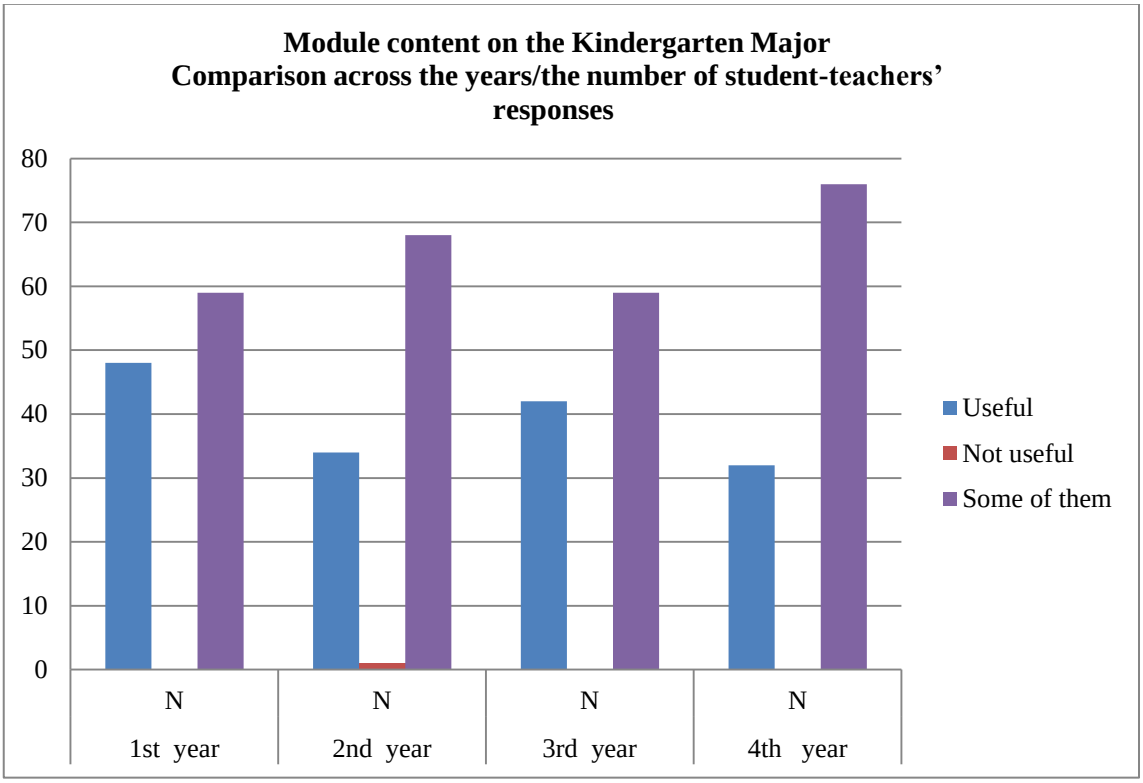
Student-teachers' reasons for joining the kindergarten programme
Comparison across the years/the number of student-teachers' responses

Reasons		**1st year**	**2nd year**	**3rd year**	**4th year**
Internal	***Personal***	121	105	83	81
	Capacity	9	8	4	1
	Informatics	74	12	24	24
External	***Society***	4	2	0	8
	University	39	31	46	36
	Job	15	6	9	7



Module content on the Kindergarten Major
Comparison across the years/the number of student-teachers' responses

The content of modules	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Useful	48	44.9	34	33.0	42	41.6	32	29.6
Not useful			1	1.0				
Some of them	59	55.1	68	66.0	59	58.4	76	70.4
Total	107	100.0	103	100.0	101	100.0	108	100.0



Part two: Student-teachers' beliefs about their knowledge in the professional preparation programme of kindergarten teachers

1. Mean ranks of student-teachers' knowledge of children's learning and development

	Statements	Student-teachers													
		First year			Second year			Third year			Fourth year			*All years*	
		Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	*Mean*	*Rank*
6	child development theories	**422**	**3.94**	**13**	**409**	**3.97**	**14**	**395**	**3.91**	**14**	**466**	**4.31**	**12**	***4.03***	***11***
7	pre-school child characteristics	**490**	**4.58**	**7**	**479**	**4.65**	**3**	**465**	**4.60**	**5**	**515**	**4.77**	**2**	***4.65***	***4***
8	children's needs and how teachers meet those needs	**512**	**4.79**	**1**	**478**	**4.64**	**4**	**466**	**4.61**	**4**	**504**	**4.67**	**5**	***4.68***	***3***
9	supporting child's moral, mental, physical growth in a natural environment similar to child's family environment	**498**	**4.65**	**4**	**476**	**4.62**	**5**	**461**	**4.56**	**6**	**500**	**4.63**	**6**	***4.62***	***5***
10	supporting children's Islamic religious beliefs in the oneness of God	**510**	**4.77**	**2**	**480**	**4.66**	**2**	**471**	**4.66**	**2**	**511**	**4.73**	**3**	***4.71***	***2***
11	play and the importance of play in kindergarten child's learning	**507**	**4.74**	**3**	**489**	**4.75**	**1**	**480**	**4.75**	**1**	**516**	**4.78**	**1**	***4.76***	***1***
12	pedagogical strategies used in teaching young children	**440**	**4.11**	**12**	**421**	**4.09**	**12**	**412**	**4.08**	**12**	**483**	**4.47**	**11**	***4.19***	***10***
13	the methods of child raising	**485**	**4.53**	**8**	**451**	**4.38**	**9**	**435**	**4.31**	**8**	**500**	**4.63**	**6**	***4.46***	***6***
14	childhood problems and how to handle educational and behavioural problems	**496**	**4.64**	**5**	**473**	**4.59**	**6**	**468**	**4.63**	**3**	**510**	**4.72**	**4**	***4.65***	***4***
15	child protection against dangers	**491**	**4.59**	**6**	**454**	**4.41**	**8**	**436**	**4.32**	**7**	**486**	**4.50**	**10**	***4.46***	***6***
16	how to interact with children and adults at kindergarten, and parents	**484**	**4.52**	**9**	**447**	**4.34**	**10**	**434**	**4.30**	**9**	**490**	**4.54**	**8**	***4.43***	***7***

17	roles and functions of a kindergarten teacher in field experience (teaching context)	**464**	**4.34**	**11**	**442**	**4.29**	**11**	**428**	**4.24**	**10**	**493**	**4.56**	**7**	***4.36***	***9***
18	child preparation for transition to primary school life	**474**	**4.43**	**10**	**460**	**4.47**	**7**	**421**	**4.17**	**11**	**487**	**4.51**	**9**	***4.40***	***8***
19	aims and content of the kindergarten curriculum in Saudi Arabia	**415**	**3.88**	**14**	**417**	**4.05**	**13**	**407**	**4.03**	**13**	**443**	**4.10**	**13**	***4.02***	***12***

2. Mean ranks of student-teachers' knowledge of pedagogical content and the KSA kindergarten curriculum

	Statements	**Student-teachers**													
		First year			**Second year**			**Third year**			**Fourth year**			***All years***	
		Sum	**Mean**	**Rank**	**Sum**	**Mean**	**Rank**	**Sum**	**Mean**	**Rank**	**Sum**	**Mean**	**Rank**	***Mean***	***Rank***
20	provide children with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their age	**493**	**4.61**	**2**	**471**	**4.57**	**1**	**455**	**4.50**	**1**	**487**	**4.51**	**4**	***4.54***	***1***
21	create appropriate activities whether inside or outside the classroom for children's abilities	**471**	**4.40**	**9**	**458**	**4.45**	**5**	**438**	**4.34**	**7**	**476**	**4.41**	**8**	***4.40***	***6***
22	plan group and individual activities for kindergarten children	**477**	**4.46**	**6**	**461**	**4.48**	**4**	**448**	**4.44**	**2**	**470**	**4.35**	**11**	***4.43***	***5***
23	plan child-initiated activities, including play	**476**	**4.45**	**7**	**440**	**4.27**	**12**	**431**	**4.27**	**10**	**464**	**4.30**	**13**	***4.32***	***11***
24	plan adult-directed activities	**431**	**4.03**	**19**	**408**	**3.96**	**18**	**388**	**3.84**	**22**	**449**	**4.16**	**16**	***4.0***	***19***
25	design activities fostering intellectual development of kindergarten children	**480**	**4.49**	**4**	**455**	**4.42**	**6**	**437**	**4.33**	**8**	**487**	**4.51**	**4**	***4.44***	***4***
26	design activities fostering motor/physical skills of kindergarten children	**479**	**4.48**	**5**	**467**	**4.53**	**2**	**439**	**4.35**	**6**	**492**	**4.56**	**1**	***4.48***	***2***
27	design activities fostering emotional development of kindergarten children	**470**	**4.39**	**10**	**463**	**4.50**	**3**	**426**	**4.22**	**13**	**485**	**4.49**	**5**	***4.40***	***6***
28	design activities associated with child's learning of the scientific and mathematical concepts	**437**	**4.08**	**18**	**447**	**4.34**	**9**	**429**	**4.25**	**12**	**470**	**4.35**	**11**	***4.26***	***14***

29	design activities associated with development of the linguistic skills of kindergarten children	**462**	**4.32**	**13**	**458**	**4.45**	**5**	**441**	**4.37**	**5**	**475**	**4.40**	**9**	***4.39***	***7***
30	design activities that contribute to the development of the moral and social concepts of kindergarten children	**481**	**4.50**	**3**	**463**	**4.50**	**3**	**444**	**4.40**	**3**	**475**	**4.40**	**9**	***4.45***	***3***
31	design activities to foster the KSA cultural customs and beliefs of kindergarten children	**475**	**4.44**	**8**	**440**	**4.27**	**12**	**420**	**4.16**	**15**	**467**	**4.32**	**12**	***4.30***	***12***
32	design activities to prepare the child for reading and writing	**460**	**4.30**	**15**	**450**	**4.37**	**8**	**425**	**4.21**	**14**	**472**	**4.37**	**10**	***4.26***	***14***
33	design and produce educational aids appropriate for kindergarten children	**463**	**4.33**	**12**	**435**	**4.22**	**14**	**409**	**4.05**	**18**	**484**	**4.48**	**6**	***4.27***	***13***
34	design and produce educational games appropriate for kindergarten children	**461**	**4.31**	**14**	**438**	**4.23**	**13**	**417**	**4.13**	**17**	**488**	**4.52**	**3**	***4.30***	***12***
35	use local materials properly to design educational activities	**470**	**4.39**	**10**	**444**	**4.31**	**11**	**418**	**4.14**	**16**	**489**	**4.53**	**2**	***4.34***	***10***
36	acquire educational qualifications that distinguish them from other stage teachers	**476**	**4.45**	**7**	**446**	**4.33**	**10**	**436**	**4.32**	**9**	**478**	**4.43**	**7**	***4.38***	***8***
37	design educational context to enable children to learn	**462**	**4.32**	**13**	**446**	**4.33**	**10**	**430**	**4.26**	**11**	**488**	**4.52**	**3**	***4.36***	***9***
38	teach the subject areas of the kindergarten curriculum in KSA	**438**	**4.09**	**17**	**415**	**4.03**	**16**	**399**	**3.95**	**21**	**450**	**4.17**	**15**	***4.06***	***17***
39	assess children's learning and development across the KSA national curriculum	**437**	**4.08**	**18**	**418**	**4.06**	**15**	**405**	**4.01**	**20**	**436**	**4.04**	**18**	***4.05***	***18***
40	manage classrooms effectively	**479**	**4.48**	**5**	**454**	**4.41**	**7**	**442**	**4.38**	**4**	**478**	**4.43**	**7**	***4.43***	***5***
41	encourage children's imaginative thinking	**501**	**4.68**	**1**	**458**	**4.45**	**5**	**442**	**4.38**	**4**	**489**	**4.53**	**2**	***4.36***	***9***
42	design educational unit for kindergarten children	**465**	**4.35**	**11**	**436**	**4.23**	**13**	**407**	**4.03**	**19**	**460**	**4.26**	**14**	***4.22***	***15***
43	design and manage the kindergarten programme	**441**	**4.12**	**16**	**414**	**4.02**	**17**	**418**	**4.14**	**16**	**440**	**4.07**	**17**	***4.09***	***16***

Part three: Mean ranks of student-teachers' perceptions of the professional preparation programme for kindergarten teachers

	Statements	Student-teachers													
		First year			Second year			Third year			Fourth year			*All years*	
		Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	*Mean*	*Rank*
44	programme adequately covers all academic subject which are relevant to early childhood stage	**415**	**3.88**	**6**	**423**	**4.11**	**3**	**377**	**3.73**	**5**	**433**	**4.01**	**5**	***3.93***	***5***
45	programme design is beneficial because it includes theoretical and practical sessions	**421**	**3.93**	**7**	**411**	**3.99**	**5**	**406**	**4.02**	**2**	**455**	**4.21**	**2**	***4.03***	***4***
46	programme gives student-teachers the knowledge and skills to teach pre-school children	**458**	**4.28**	**1**	**440**	**4.27**	**1**	**430**	**4.26**	**1**	**467**	**4.32**	**1**	***4.28***	***1***
47	teaching modules in this programme are progressive and well organized	**444**	**4.15**	**2**	**432**	**4.19**	**2**	**376**	**3.72**	**6**	**445**	**4.12**	**4**	***4.05***	***3***
48	time scale of the programme (8 levels/4 years, consisting of 56 modules) enables student-teachers to be sufficiently prepared for teaching	**437**	**4.08**	**3**	**416**	**4.04**	**4**	**403**	**3.99**	**3**	**453**	**4.19**	**3**	***4.08***	***2***
49	all educational and the general preparation modules (50 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**432**	**4.04**	**5**	**378**	**3.67**	**7**	**389**	**3.85**	**5**	**416**	**3.85**	**7**	***3.85***	***7***
50	all specialized modules (78 academic hours of theoretical and practical teaching) are useful for development of students' knowledge	**433**	**4.05**	**4**	**394**	**3.83**	**6**	**389**	**3.85**	**5**	**427**	**3.95**	**6**	***3.92***	***6***

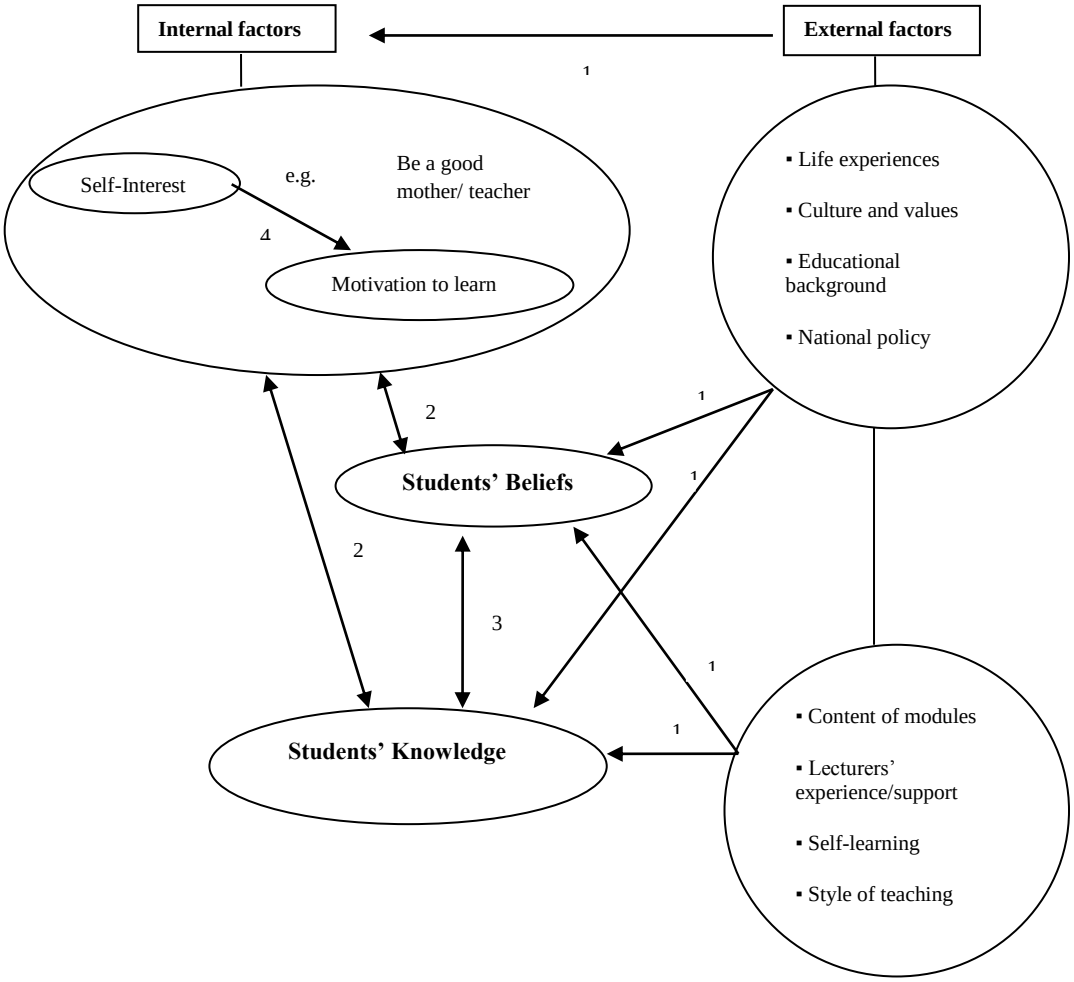
Part four: Mean ranks of student-teachers' perceptions of internal and external constraints on the programme

	Statements	Student-teachers													
		First year			Second year			Third year			Fourth year			*All years*	
		Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank	*Mean*	*Rank*
51	non-compliance of the student-teacher for studying previous requirements	**379**	**3.54**	**4**	**379**	**3.68**	**3**	**391**	**3.87**	**5**	**413**	**3.82**	**4**	***3.73***	***4***
52	number of student-teachers in class is very large	**345**	**3.22**	**6**	**372**	**3.61**	**5**	**393**	**3.89**	**4**	**405**	**3.75**	**5**	***3.62***	***5***
53	lack of interest among some student-teachers to work with pre-school children	**401**	**3.75**	**2**	**405**	**3.93**	**2**	**405**	**4.01**	**3**	**435**	**4.03**	**2**	***3.93***	***2***
54	learning environment at the college doesn't encourage learning and sound understanding	**354**	**3.31**	**5**	**359**	**3.49**	**6**	**349**	**3.46**	**6**	**388**	**3.59**	**6**	***3.46***	***6***
55	the university web doesn't provide adequately the necessary information about the modules	**394**	**3.68**	**3**	**375**	**3.64**	**4**	**412**	**4.08**	**2**	**425**	**3.94**	**3**	***3.84***	***3***
56	lack of kindergarten attached to the college for the training of student-teachers	**466**	**4.36**	**1**	**450**	**4.37**	**1**	**467**	**4.62**	**1**	**55**	**4.63**	**1**	***4.50***	***1***

Appendix I

Summary of the Findings from the Interviews' Data Analysis/First Year

Figure 1. The interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge



1. Form/influence/affect
2. Link with
3. Interact with and affect
4. Lead to

Figure 2. Concept map of key conceptual areas from data analysis/student-teachers in the first year

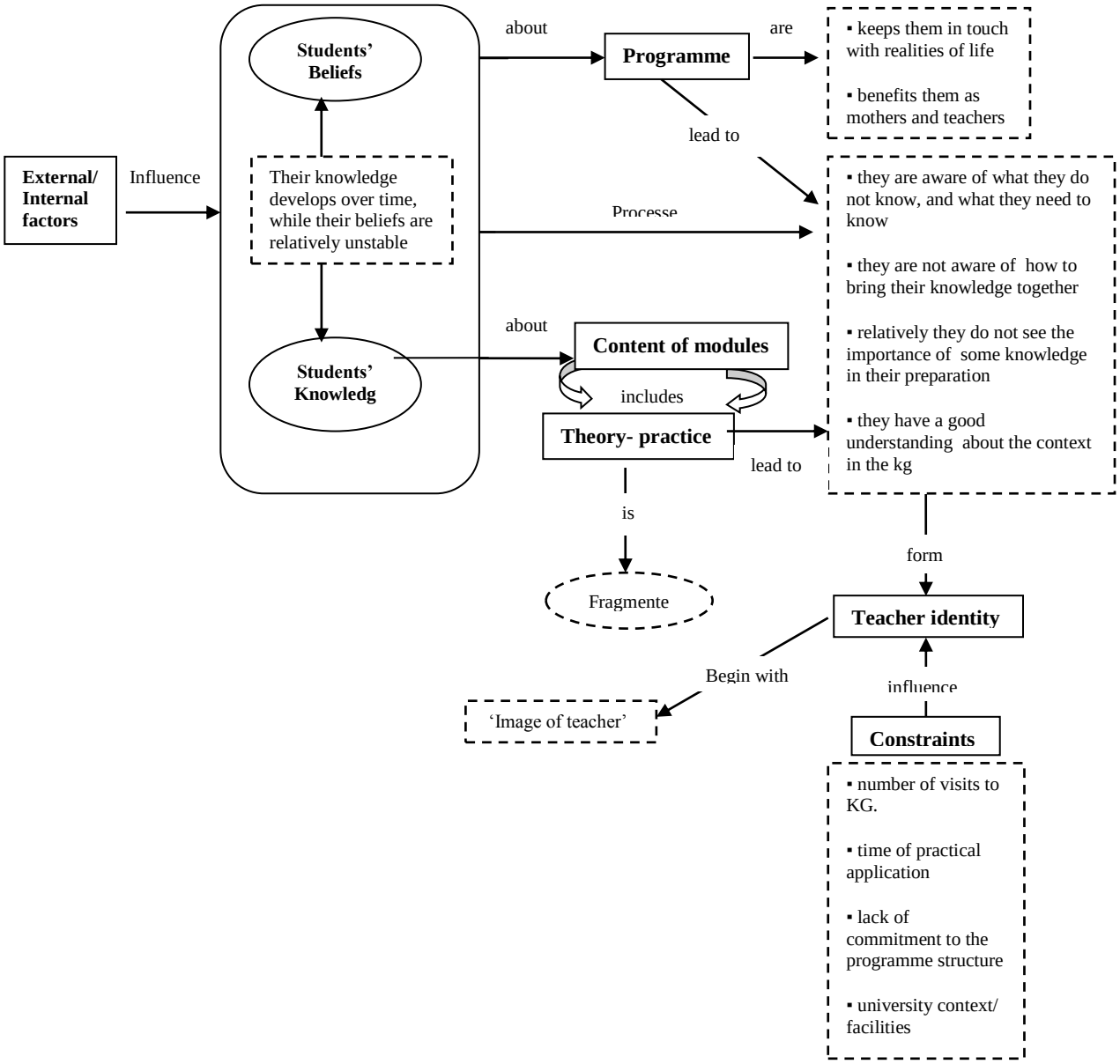
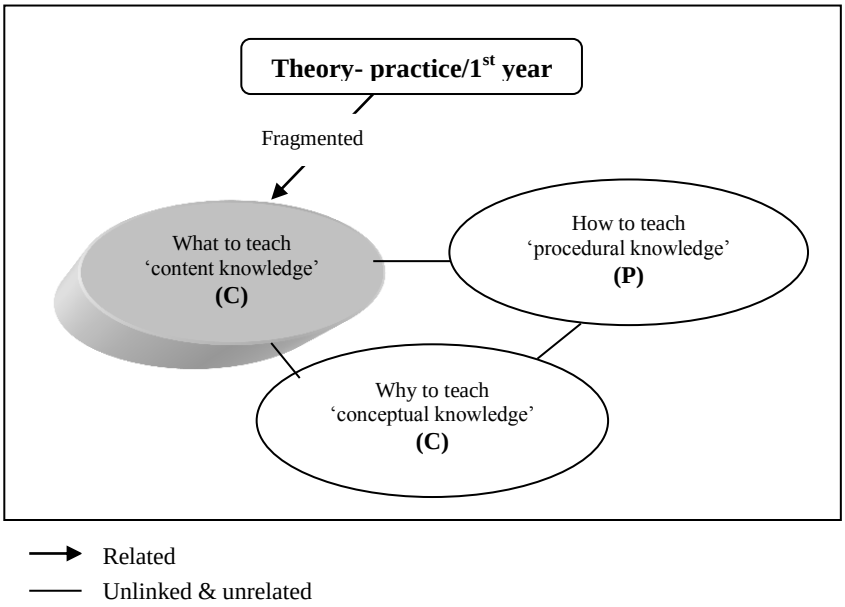


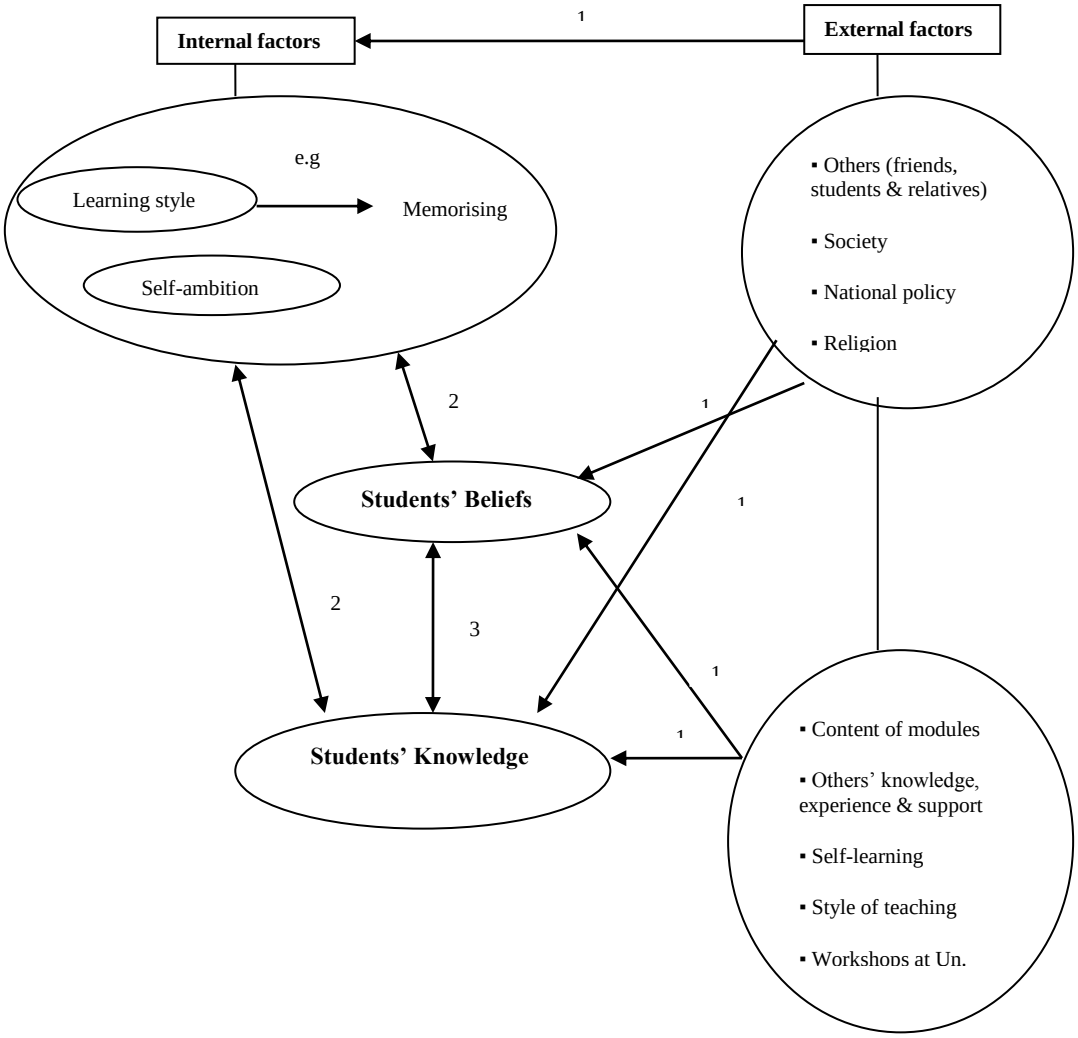
Figure 3. Building knowledge of teaching/first year



Appendix J

Summary of the Findings from the Interviews' Data Analysis/Second Year

Figure 1. The interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge



1. Form/influence/affect
2. Link with
3. Interact with and affect

Figure 2. Concept map of key conceptual areas from data analysis/student-teachers in the second year

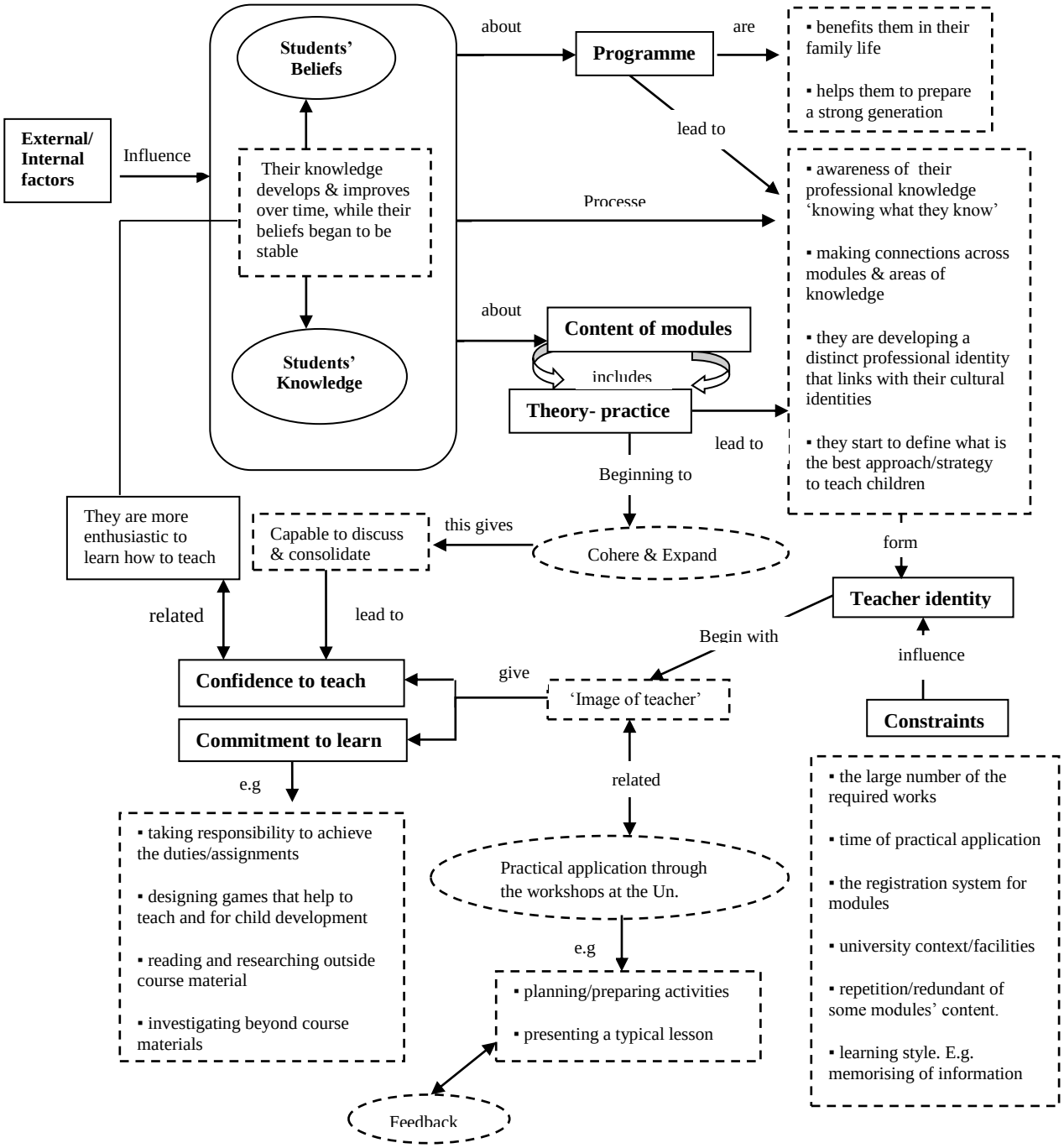
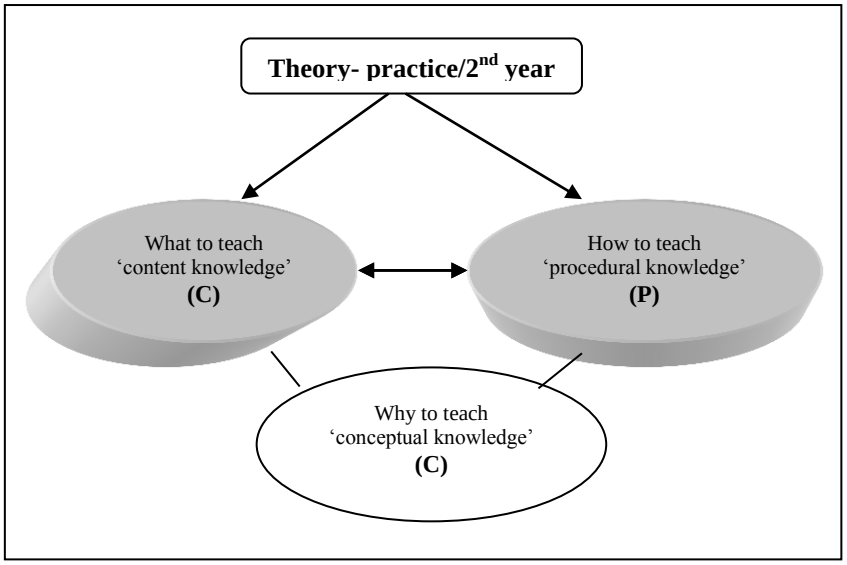


Figure 3. Building knowledge of teaching/second year

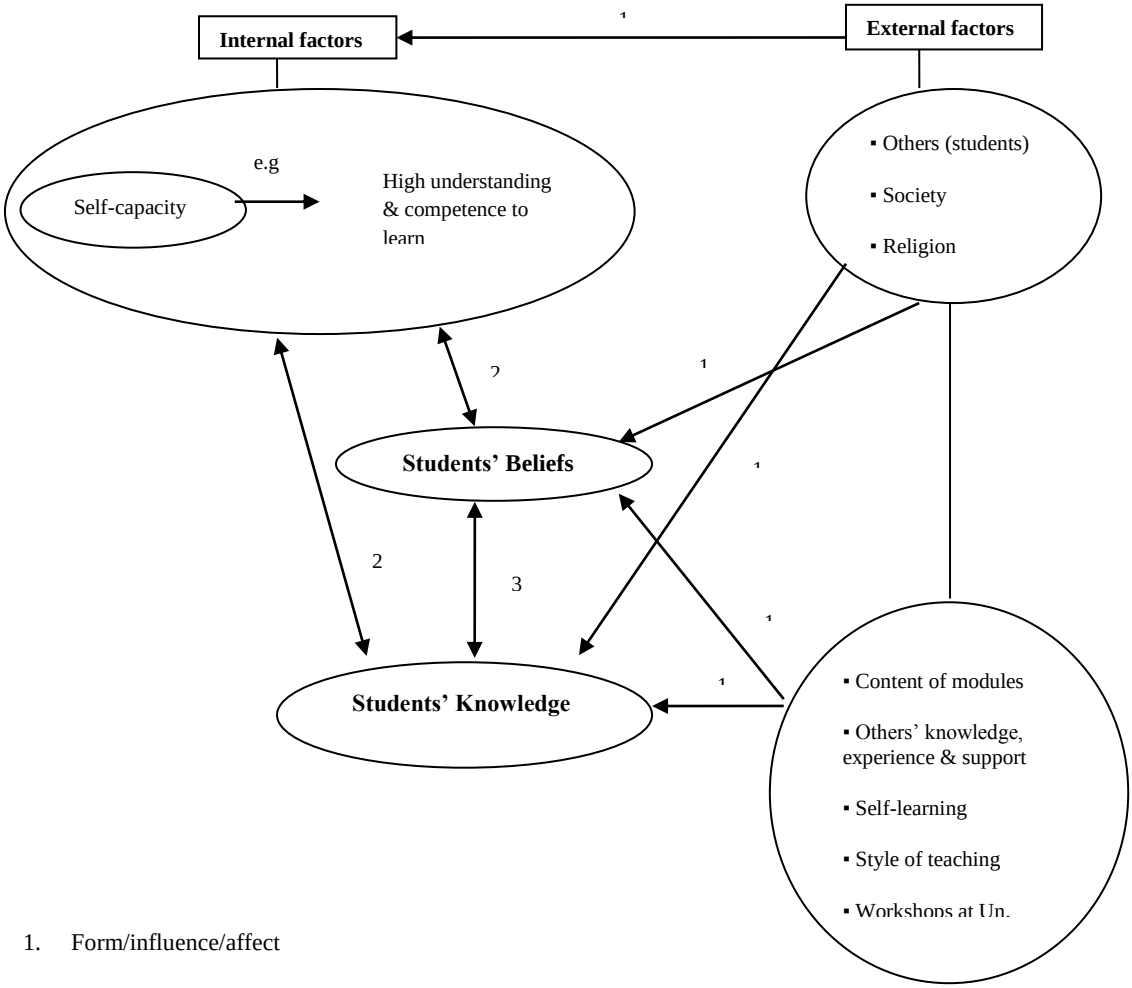


Related
Linked & related
Unlinked & unrelated

Appendix K

Summary of the Findings from the Interviews' Data Analysis/Third Year

Figure 1. The interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge



1. Form/influence/affect
2. Link with
3. Interact with and affect

Figure 2. Concept map of key conceptual areas from data analysis/student-teachers in the third year

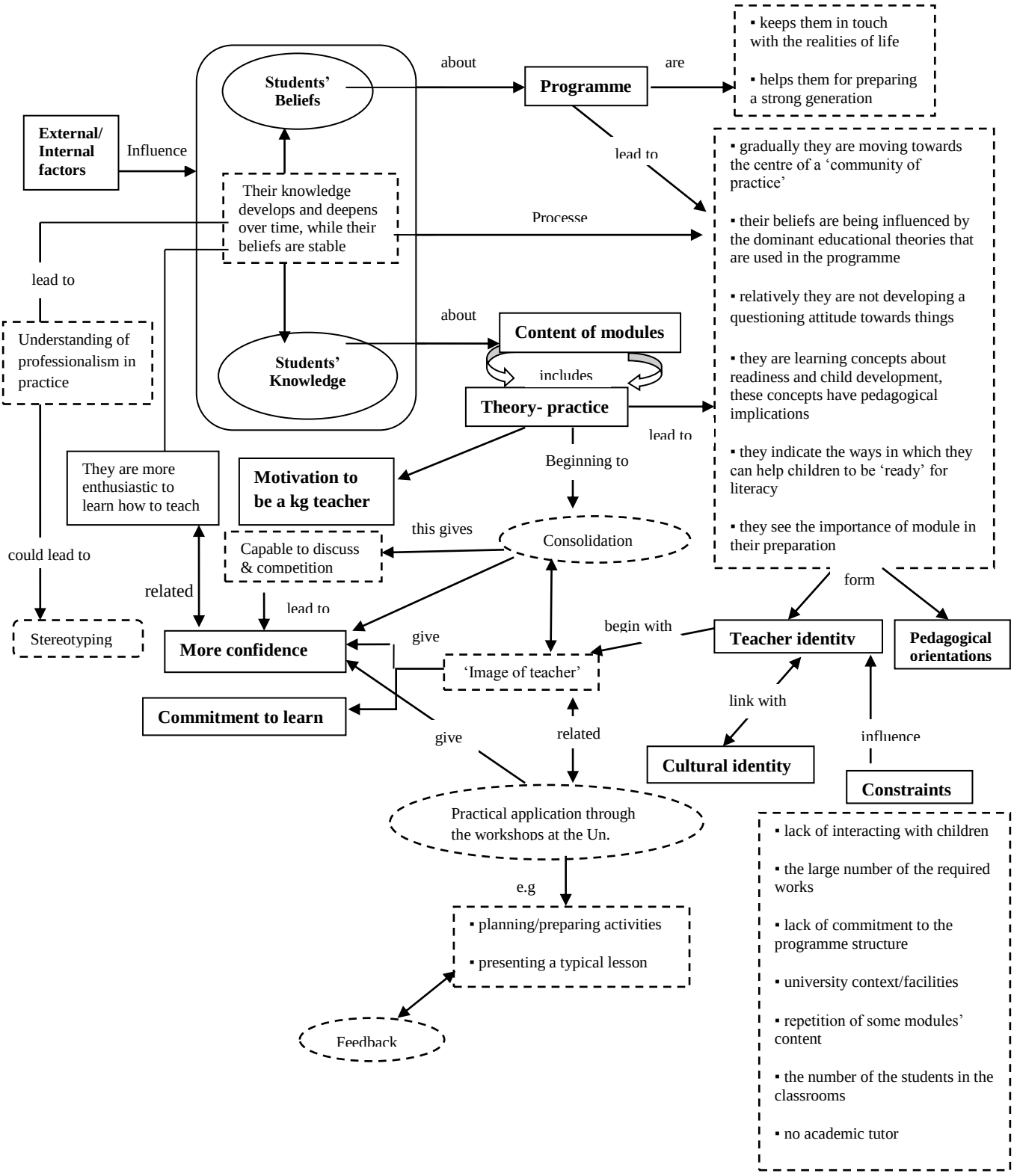
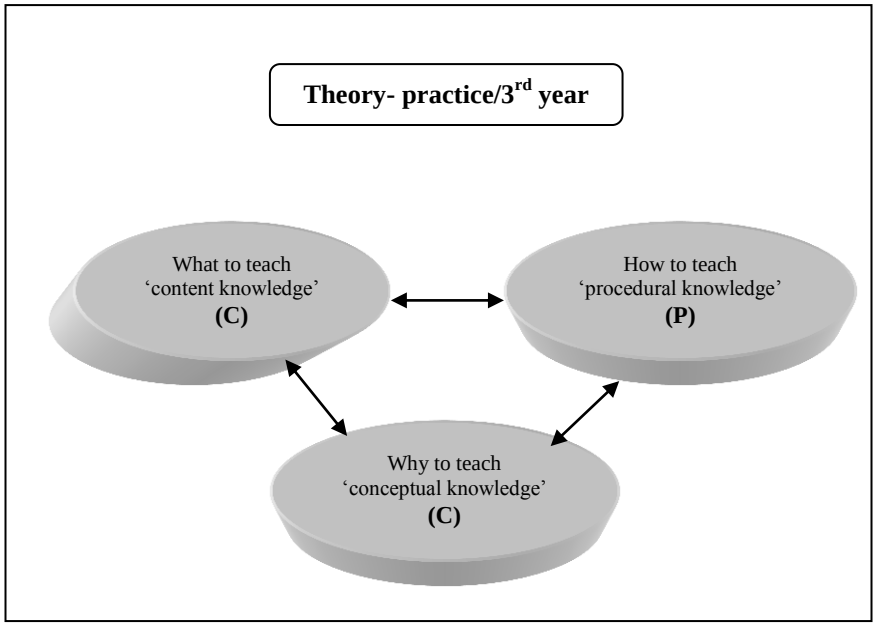


Figure 3. Building knowledge of teaching/third year



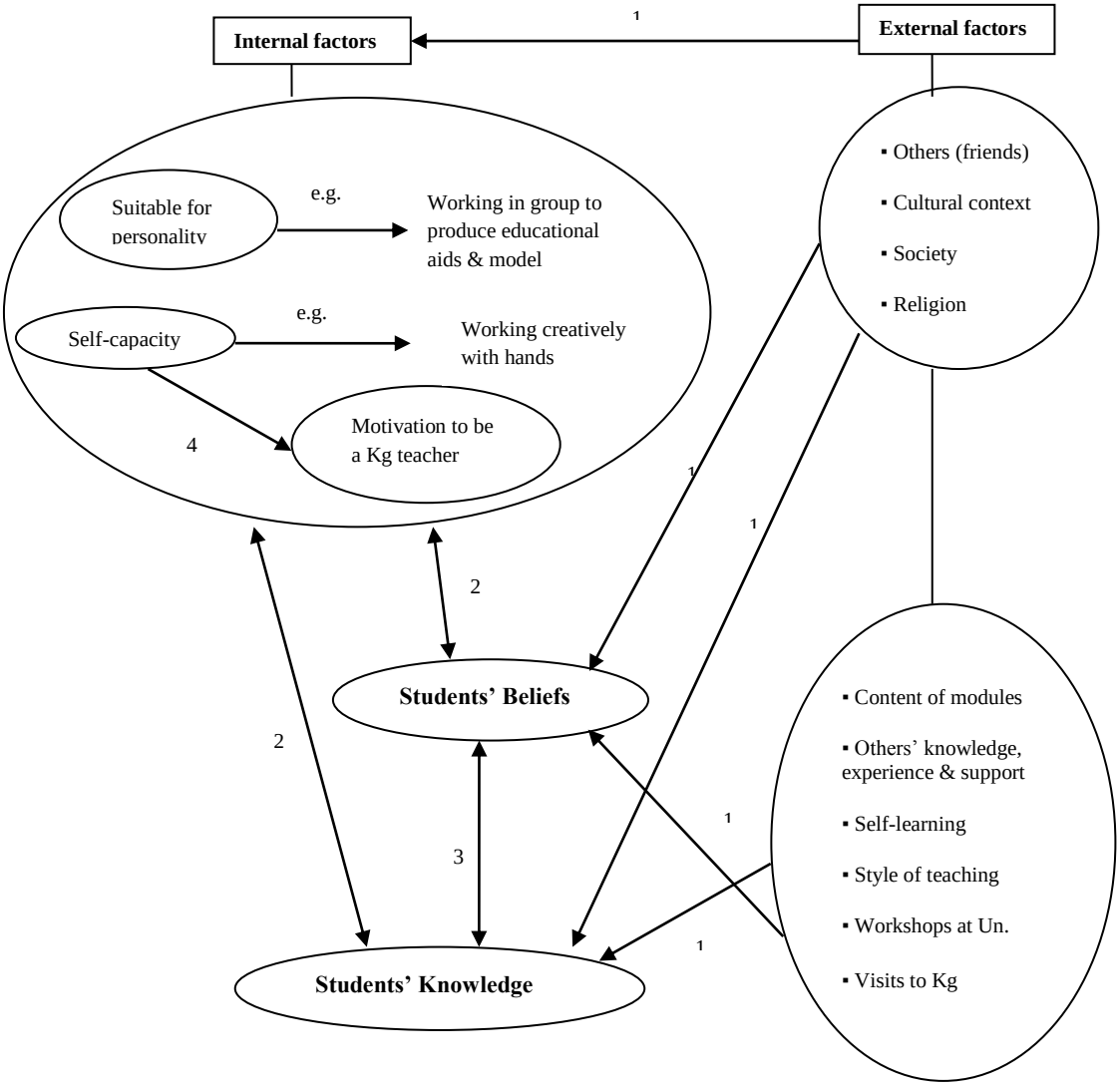
Related

Linked & related

Appendix L

Summary of the Findings from the Interviews' Data Analysis/Fourth Year/Level 7

Figure 1. The interaction between student-teachers' beliefs and knowledge



1. Form/influence/affect
2. Link with
3. Interact with and affect
4. Lead to

Figure 2. Concept map of key conceptual areas from data analysis/student-teachers in the fourth year/ level 7

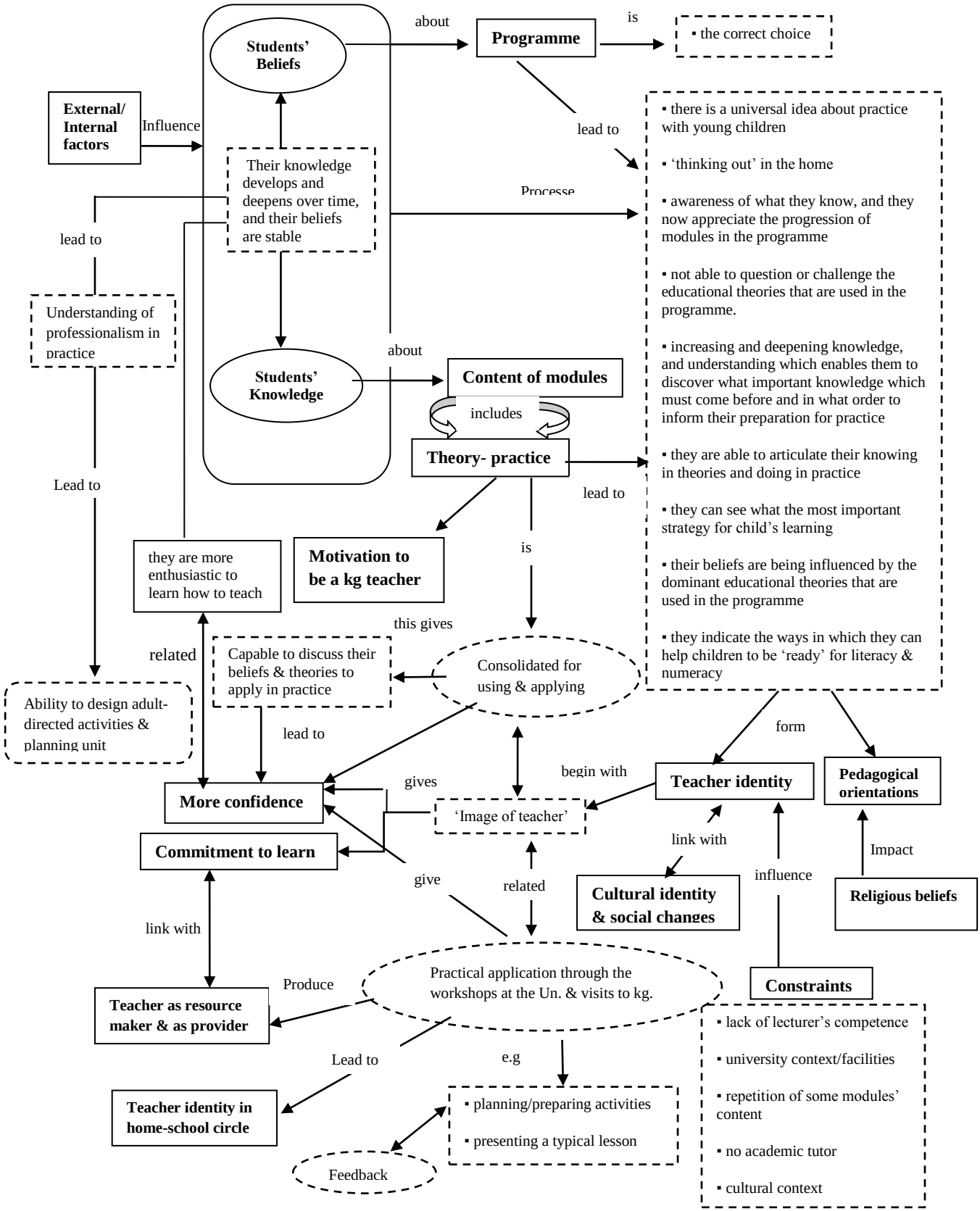
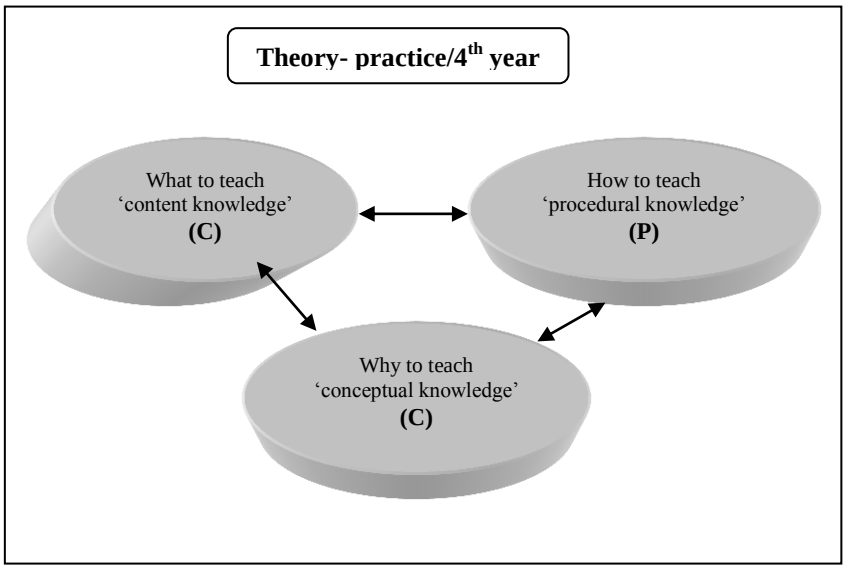


Figure 3. Building knowledge of teaching/fourth year



Related

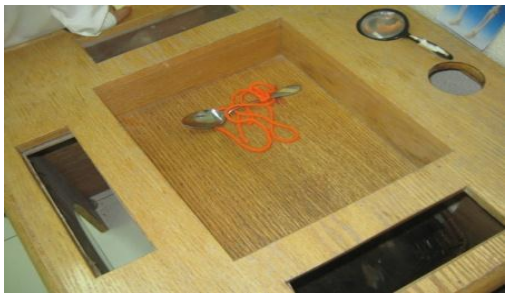
Linked & Related

Appendix M

Exmples of Student-teachers' Lessons/Children's Activities
"Health and Safety Unit"
Lesson: How to be clean during your outdoor trip

Lesson: The safety and security in trips/Trip to the beach

Role play/Imaginative activities
Doctor



Role play/Imaginative activities
Traffic warden

Role play/Imaginative activities
Fireman

“Sand unit”
Activity in outdoor free-play time
Using sand to reinforce learning numbers



“Clothing unit”
Activity indoor free-play time
Using sewing materials to strength children’s gross/fine motor skills




“My book unit”
Lesson: Kinds of books
Some practices in the library corner






Lesson: Basic colours
Some practices in the art corner

Appendix N

Trainee Student Tracking Form (TSTF)

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الملك فيصل

استمارة متابعة الطالبة المتدربة

أسم الطالبة..... الرقم الأكاديمي التخصص.....
أسم الروضة ..... تاريخ الزيارة / / ١٤ اليوم.....
مستوى الأطفال ..... المشرفة التربوية .....

م	العبارة	١	٢	٣	٤	ملاحظـــات
	أولا: السمات الشخصية					
١	المظهر العام					
٢	لديها ثقة بالنفس و قدرة على الأداء.					
٣	تتقبل النقد البناء.					
٤	تبني علاقة طيبة بزميلاتها و أدارة الروضة.					
٥	الرغبة في التعاون و التفاعل مع الأطفال.					
	ثانيا :مهارة التخطيط و تقسيم الأنشطة داخل الفصل					
٦	تحدد أهداف سلوكية و قابلة للقياس					
٧	شمول الأهداف السلوكية لجوانب التعلم المعرفية و الوجدانية و المهارية					
٨	تحدد أنشطة تعليمية متنوعة و مناسبة لأهداف النشاط.					
٩	القدرة على توزيع الوقت على فقرات النشاط.					
	ثالثا : الوسائل التعليمية					
١٠	مدى ملائمة الوسيلة لتحقيق الأهداف.					
١١	استخدام الوسائل التعليمية في الوقت المناسب.					
١٢	مراعاة قواعد الأمن والسلامة في استخدام الوسيلة					
١٣	القدرة على استخدام الوسيلة الجيدة من حيث الوضوح، و البساطة، الخامات، الجاذبية استثارة اهتمام الأطفال.					
	رابعا : مهارة تنفيذ الأنشطة داخل الفصل					
١٤	تنوع أساليب وطرق التدريس تبعا للمهارات و الخبرات التي ستقدمها للأطفال.					
١٥	التهيئة للنشاط بأساليب متنوعة تثير اهتمام الأطفال.					
١٦	تعرض الخبرات المتضمنة بالنشاط بصورة متسلسلة.					
١٧	تربط الخبرات التعليمية الحديثة بالخبرات التعليمية السابقة					
١٨	توفر أدوات و أشياء حقيقية و مجسمة					
١٩	القدرة على السيطرة و التحكم في قاعة النشاط.					
٢٠	توفر لهم فترات طويلة من الوقت لكي يتمكنوا من الاستكشاف.					
٢١	توفر لهم عدد كافي من الخامات المكررة.					
٢٢	إعطاء التعزيز في الوقت المناسب.					
٢٣	لا تجبرهم على استدخال وجهات نظر الآخرين (متمركزين حول ذواتهم)					
٢٤	تنوع في استخدام الأنشطة التعليمية بما يحقق أهداف النشاط.					
٢٥	تراعي الفروق الفردية بين الأطفال.					
٢٦	تطرح أسئلة تثير التفكير عند الطفل.					
٢٧	تعالج إجابات الأطفال بصورة ملائمة.					
	خامسا : التقويم					
٢٨	تستخدم التقويم البنائي (المرحلي) أثناء تنفيذ النشاط					
٢٩	التنوع في أساليب التقويم الختامي					
٣٠	مدى ملائمة أسلوب التقويم للنشاط					

Appendix O

Trainee Student Assessment Form at the End of the Teaching Practice/ For Supervisor

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الملك فيصل

استمارة تقييم الطالبة المتدربة

أسم الطالبة..... الرقم الاكاديمى .....التخصص
أسم الروضة ..... مستوى الأطفال.....
المشرفة التربوية.....

م	العبارة	١	٢	٣	٤	ملاحظـــات
	أولا: السمات الشخصية					
١	لديها ثقة بالنفس و قدرة على الأداء.					
٢	تتقبل النقد البناء.					
٣	تبنى علاقة طيبة بزميلاتها و أدارة الروضة.					
	ثانيا :مهارة التخطيط و تقسيم الأنشطة داخل الفصل					
٤	تحدد أهداف سلوكية و قابلة للقياس.					
٥	شمول الأهداف السلوكية لجوانب التعلم المعرفية و الوجدانية و المهارية					
٦	تحدد أهداف تراعى فيها طبيعة النشاط.					
	ثالثا : الوسائل التعليمية					
٧	تحديد الوسائل التعليمية الملائمة لكل نشاط					
٨	استخدام الوسائل التعليمية في الوقت المناسب.					
	رابعا : مهارة تنفيذ الأنشطة داخل الفصل					
٩	اختيار أسلوب التدريس الملائم للنشاط.					
١٠	التهيئة للنشاط بأساليب متنوعة تثير اهتمام الأطفال.					
١١	تربط الخبرات التعليمية الحديثة بالخبرات التعليمية السابقة					
١٢	توفر لهم فترات طويلة من الوقت لكي يتمكنوا من الاستكشاف.					
١٣	تنوع في استخدام الأنشطة التعليمية بما يحقق أهداف النشاط.					
١٤	تراعى الفروق الفردية بين الأطفال.					
١٥	تطرح أسئلة تثير التفكير عند الطفل .					
١٦	إعطاء التعزيز في الوقت المناسب.					
١٧	تعالج إجابات الأطفال بصورة ملائمة.					
	خامسا : التقويم					
١٨	تستخدم التقويم البنائي (المرحلي) أثناء تنفيذ النشاط					
١٩	التنوع في أساليب التقويم الختامي					
٢٠	مدى ملائمة أسلوب التقويم للنشاط					

الدرجة الكلية توقيع المشرفة التربوية

Trainee Student Assessment Form at the End of the Teaching Practice/ For Classroom Teacher

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

INGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الملك فيصل

بطاقة تقويم الطالبة المتدربة (المعلمة المتعاونة)

اسم الطالبة المتدربة: ..... الرقم الأكاديمي: .....
التخصص: .....
مدرسة التطبيق: .....
المستوى الدراسي: .....
اسم المشرفة التربوية: .....

الجزء الأول : ضع إشارة في المكان المناسب :

معايير التقويم	التقدير				الدرجة
	ضعيف ١	وسط ٢	فوق الوسط ٣	ممتاز ٤	
١- ادارة الصف وضبطه					
٢- الاستعداد والقدرة على الأداء					
٣- استخدام الوسائل التعليمية					
٤- تقبل النقد والاستفادة من التوجيه					
٥- تنوع مجالات التقويم					
المجموع الكلي للدرجات					

الجزء الثاني : الرجاء تزويدنا بالمعلومات التالية :

١- عدد الأنشطة أو الأركان المشاهدة: .....
٢- عدد الأيام التي مارست فيها التدريب: .....
٣- عدد الأيام التي لم تحضرها: .....

ملاحظات أخرى .....
.....

اسم المعلمة المتعاونة ..... توقيعها .....

Trainee Student Assessment Form at the End of the Teaching Practice/ For Headteacher

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

INGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الملك فيصل

بطاقة تقويم الطالبة المتدربة (مديرة المدرسة)

اسم الطالبة المتدربة: ..... الرقم الأكاديمي: .....
التخصص: .....
مدرسة التطبيق: .....
المستوى الدراسي: .....
اسم المشرفة التربوية: .....

الجزء الأول : ضع إشارة في المكان المناسب :

معايير التقويم	التقدير				الدرجة
	ضعيف ١	وسط ٢	فوق الوسط ٣	ممتاز ٤	
١-المظهر والسلوك					
٢- التعاون مع المدرسة واحترام انظمتها					
٣- التعاون مع معلماتالمدرسة					
٤- المشاركة في الأنشطة والمسؤوليات					
٥- المواظبة واحترام المواعيد					
المجموع الكلي للدرجات					

الجزء الثاني : الرجاء تزويدنا بالمعلومات التالية :

١- عدد الأيام التي تغيبت عنها.....
٢- عدد الأيام التي تأخرت فيها عن الحضور في الوقت المحدد للدوام: .....
٣- عدد الأيام التي خرجت فيها من المدرسة قبل الوقت المحدد: .....

ملاحظات أخرى .....
.....

اسم مديرة المدرسة ..... توقيعها .....

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